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The Shape of Things

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LARGE NUMBERS OF RUSSIAN RESERVISTS have been called up, and men and materials are being concentrated on the western frontier. What is the purpose of these preparations? It is possible that the Red Army is solely concerned to insure that any Polish soldiers driven across the frontier can be disarmed and interned. The surmise has also been made that Russia fears, despite the Nazi pact, that Hitler may change his objectives and drive on eastward after he has conquered the Poles. This is extremely unlikely. Germany has made sacrifices in order to secure Russia's neutrality and thus ward off the nightmare of having to fight major wars in east and west simultaneously, and now that it is engaged in war with the Western powers it is more anxious than ever to placate Russia. This lends force to a third theory —that Moscow is preparing to occupy some part of eastern Poland, including the Ukrainian district. It may be that Stalin, when he made his pact with Germany, expected that Poland would surrender Danzig and the Corridor and become a docile buffer state. But he must also have considered the possibility that Poland would fight, and have made provision against the contingency that Germany would then extend to the Russian frontier. Certainly it would have been foolhardy to give Hitler carte blanche either to incorporate the whole of Poland in the Reich or to turn the part he did not want into a Nazi "protectorate." Consequently it could surprise nobody except members of the Communist Party if the hints from Berlin of arrangements to "compensate" Russia at Poland's expense turn out to be well-founded.

*

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT HAS CANCELED A radio broadcast he had promised to make in honor of "Democratic Women's Day" on the ground that "every utterance of mine in these days of tension [must] be addressed to all of our citizens, regardless of sex, age, or political affiliation." We hope we may be forgiven for thinking the explanation a little unctuous. Political discussion in this country has always been carried on at the top of the lungs, and moderation might be desirable even

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in normal times, but we think it too soon to go to the other extreme and call a halt on all "partisanship." We are not at war, yet, and partisanship is still the mechanism by which opposing points of view are thrashed out in a democracy. We fear that if we are all to be taken into a great camp of National Unity, some of us may be taken in in another sense. Washington is full of rumors of business appeasement. The announcement of the White House staff reorganization was accompanied by an unnecessary slap at the brain trust by Presidential Secretary Stephen T. Early. A disturbing story published by the Washington *Times-Herald* on September 9 reports that William S. Knudsen of General Motors will "coordinate" business, industry, and labor in a new division of the Department of Commerce. Production will be "adjusted" to consumption, and the National Labor Relations Board may be dropped as no longer necessary. We hope the rumor was induced by high fever and does not represent further attempts at coordination. Why oppose *Gleichschaltung* abroad if we're going to have it at home? There is no need to repeat the exuberant polemics of 1936 when Mr. Roosevelt was a "red" and the harmless Mr. Landon a devious "fascist," but let's have no premature moratorium on partisanship.

⁂

HOUSEWIVES WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO heed Mayor LaGuardia's advice against hoarding sugar and other foods. As he says, such action will only play into the hands of speculators and multiply the housewives' own difficulties. It was, however, the uprush of prices on the wholesale commodity markets which started consumers besieging the stores, and that uprush seems in most cases entirely inexcusable. Even if the war will mean an important increase in overseas demand for leading foods, this will not become operative immediately, and at present there are abundant supplies. What has happened is that processors and merchants holding stocks have refused to part with them, banking on fear psychology to send prices soaring. The understandable though unfortunate reaction of the public gives them a chance to unload these stocks at a nice profit. When the panic buying subsides and the statistical position of wheat, sugar, butter, and other foods reasserts itself, prices will drop sharply, and the middlemen will be able to replace their stocks at lower prices. Consumers will be left holding the bag, and the farmers, after having their hopes raised, will probably gain nothing from this speculative orgy. It is for this reason that we think Secretary of Agriculture Wallace mistaken in his rather nonchalant attitude toward the commodity-market fever. He is perfectly right in his assertion that prices of most farm products are still low as compared with 1914 or 1929, and he can hardly be blamed for hoping that after their long lean years the farmers' position may improve. But the mad markets of the past week will almost certainly be followed by a reaction and perhaps leave the farmers worse off than before.

⁂

THE BLACK-OUT IN THE THIRD REICH GROWS more and more complete. The military penal code, introduced just before the Nazi armies marched into Poland, extended the list of offenses punishable by death or long prison sentences; last week this was extended still further. The definition of espionage and sabotage has been widened. Now a worker who remains away from his job voluntarily may be judged guilty of sabotage and hanged. (Women, by some strange quirk of Nazi justice, will be beheaded.) The dispatch bearing the news of the new decrees was followed by another reporting the execution of an unidentified man who refused to "cooperate in security work." Other decrees forbid workers to change jobs without permission; needless to say, they must take any job assigned to them, and it is expressly provided that a worker going from one job to another less well paid cannot demand his former wage. Radios capable of receiving broadcasts from other countries have been confiscated, and there are penalties for listening to such broadcasts or repeating them. Meanwhile former Socialists who have somehow managed to remain at large in Germany since 1933 are being put under "protective arrest," and it is reported that one-third of the members of the National Unity Party, the Czechs' only legal political group, which the Nazis had hoped to use for their purposes, are also in "protective" custody. Add to these restrictions the fact that the whole German nation has been put on rations which if they were fulfilled—shortages of fresh meat and butter and fats are reported—would provide barely a subsistence diet, and one wonders how long even a Spartan nation can go on fighting.

⁂

BRITAIN IS NOW OPERATING UNDER A WARtime dictatorship almost as stringent as that of a totalitarian country. But while in Germany the masses have been dragged into war without any opportunity to express their views, in Britain it may almost be said that the people coerced the government into refusing more appeasement, freely accepting the probability that the consequence would be war. Moreover, the right of criticism remains and is being exercised in both Parliament and the press. The most drastic use of its emergency powers yet made by the British government is of course in respect to the control of employment. Employers must now get permits to renew contracts with workers or to take on additional ones. The object of this order, which parallels the decree long in force in Germany, is evidently to prevent competition for labor and the resulting increased wages. The British government wants to check

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the kind of inflationary movement which occurred in the last war when competition between private and public enterprise for labor and materials sent prices soaring with wages tagging behind. This time prices are being pegged and industry, labor, and foreign trade brought under control from the outset. But if maximum resources are to be freed for war purposes, rigid restriction of profits will also be necessary, and this has yet to be done.

*

THE DIES COMMITTEE SPENT SEVERAL DAYS last week endeavoring to prove that the American Communist Party is subsidized by funds from Moscow. It heard Ben Gitlow, a prominent leader of the party from 1922 to 1929, assert that Communists here received more than $100,000 annually from the Comintern, which operates from Moscow; and it heard Earl Browder, who became general secretary shortly after Gitlow's break with the party, vehemently deny that the party had received a cent from abroad since he became its head. The simplest, if not too plausible, explanation is that both are right and that the American Communist Party's golden age ended with Gitlow's tenure. But the issue itself, especially in the light of the party's current status, scarcely seems a momentous one. Anyone who has watched Earl Browder turn ideological handsprings since the German-Russian pact is unlikely to begrudge him a union wage; moreover, the character of the party's operations here scarcely resemble those of a million-dollar enterprise. And there is singularly little evidence that the party's contemporary policies menace anything except its own existence. Perhaps the greatest danger is that the wave of vague "anti-ism" feeling unleashed by the pact will permit wholesale assaults on wide areas of civil liberties. We say this fully cognizant of the fact that the Communists, by their willingness to mimic the latest turn in Soviet policy, have made themselves especially vulnerable to attack.

*

TWO YEARS AGO MOSES L. ANNENBERG, THE top man in a vast empire of race-track gambling extending into poolrooms in 350 cities in 44 states, declined to start a new tipsheet in an Eastern town because, as he wrote in a private letter, "we simply cannot have everything." "Our position," he went on, "is similar to that of the English nation. . . . We in the racing field own three-quarters of the globe and manage the balance. In other words, the few little nations that are left have to pay us tribute to continue." The "English nation" of Moses L. Annenberg is cracking fast. After an extended investigation a federal grand jury in Chicago has been handing down indictments of Annenberg and a number of his colleagues at the rate of one a week. The counts against the publisher of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* include evasion of income-tax payments amounting to nearly $3,500,000, conspiracy to defraud the government of such payments, and using the mails to further a lottery scheme. But none of these charges should bother Annenberg as much as the grand jury's ominous declaration that no monopoly indictment can be brought because in the jury's view the Sherman Anti-Trust Act was designed to cover only legitimate businesses, not illegal activities. The American Telegraph and Telephone Company, the Illinois Bell Telephone Company, and the Western Union have all been notified of the lottery indictments as a "warning." Those who read F. B. Warren's thorough description of the workings of the Annenberg system which appeared in *The Nation* of July 30 and August 6, 1938, will appreciate the pertinence of that warning; the A. T. and T. took in $555,000 on the arrangement in a single year. But that is small potatoes compared with the Annenberg cut. The weekly take from Chicago's 2,000 bookies alone came to some $160,000.

*

THE RADIO HAS ABANDONED THE NEW world war with almost indecent suddenness. Special broadcasts continue, but they are few in number and most of the war news is jammed into the regular news periods. Comments on developments have been reduced proportionately. A sharp decrease in attention to Europe's struggle was natural when the tension of crisis ended in the tedious horror of war; public interest has lessened, and constant encroachments on the commercial programs must have depressed the sponsors and the radio companies alike. But the change has been too sudden and too complete. For example, John Gunther, speaking from London on Saturday evening, was to be heard on NBC's Bridgeport, Connecticut, station, WICC, but not on WJZ in New York. There a sponsored dance-music program occupied the same time. Important statements by public men have been ignored—including Göring's provocative remarks to the German munitions workers. The public has learned to turn to the radio for spot news as well as comments, and it will, we suspect, resent this abrupt collapse of the magnificent reporting service built up during the pre-war days of crisis. If even one major network would give regular bulletins, perhaps at hourly intervals between general programs, it would perform a public service and would, we are certain, gain enough public support to pay for the venture.

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NEW YORK CITY IS ABOUT TO EMBARK ON its own little experiment in "war socialism." The La-Guardia administration is on the verge of baling out the bankrupt Interborough and the hard-pressed Brooklyn-

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Manhattan rapid-transit companies in a deal that will certainly end and probably double the long-cherished five-cent fare. "Government ownership" provides the sugar-coating, and the city prepares to repeat the mistake it made before the last war—in a worse form than before. The contracts under which the city-owned and company-equipped subways are now operated were written in 1913. At that time there was talk of a three-cent fare, and the five-cent fare seemed to promise such ample returns that the city agreed to subordinate its own investment to the much smaller contribution made by the companies. The higher prices and increased operating expenses brought on by the war wiped out what would have been the city's share of the operating profits, and fixed charges on the city's investment have had to be paid by the taxpayer. The one advantage lay in the five-cent fare at which the companies were forced to operate. At least the subway rider benefited. But if the city now buys out the companies as planned—particularly at the price agreed upon, which leaves but a fragile margin of profit, even on paper—the burden will fall on the rider. Fares must go up to meet increased operating costs as prices and wages rise. Milo R. Maltbie, now chairman of the New York Public Service Commission, was the sole dissenter on the old commission which approved the 1913 agreements. Judge Reuben L. Haskell, in the face of threatened political reprisals by Mayor LaGuardia, has the honor of being the only dissenter from the approval given the present plan by the Transit Commission.

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THE ALPHABETICAL BATTLE OF THE ACTORS and the stagehands which we tried to reduce to its ABC's in our issue of August 19 was suddenly settled on September 3 with a complete victory for the Associated Actors and Artistes of America (the Four A's). The vaudeville union, the American Federation of Actors, whose expulsion from the Four A's precipitated the row, was permanently thrown into the discard by the settlement, and Ralph Whitehead, its executive secretary, was not even mentioned. The stagehands' union, which championed Mr. Whitehead to the point of giving him a charter to organize entertainers in all fields, thus declaring jurisdictional war on the Four A's, withdrew the charter and presumably promised to keep hands off the actors. Sophie Tucker and Harry Richman, who had followed Mr. Whitehead and as a result had been suspended from Actors' Equity, were reinstated. The settlement prevented the outbreak of an intra-union strike from Broadway to Hollywood which would have been disastrous for the whole entertainment industry and would have thrown first-nighters as well as theatrical employees out of work. The old war between the stagehands and the actors seems now on the way to permanent peace. In order to prevent a recurrence of the controversy, the parties to the dispute agreed that the stagehands and the actors will enter into an agreement similar to that existing between the stagehands and the musicians. It will amount to the formation of an amusement federation within the A. F. of L. This is a sensible arrangement which should have been worked out long ago.

The "Peace" Offensive

HAVING failed to achieve the subjugation of Poland without fighting, Hitler is still hoping to localize the war and thus avoid the risks to his regime that any prolonged conflict must involve. In the nature of the case the strategy devised to achieve this end could hardly be kept secret, and now the inimitable Göring has exposed the trap so clearly that it is almost inconceivable the intended victims can be lured into it.

Blown up by the rapidity with which they have overrun western Poland, the Nazis now boast that in a few weeks their campaign on that front will be finished and they will then be ready to talk peace. Once they have broken the Polish army, they hope to instal a puppet government in Warsaw which will sign on the dotted line. As one government spokesman in Berlin euphemistically puts it: "Now is the time for a competent political leader in Poland to arise, bring control to a demoralized situation, and come to a realistic, just understanding with Germany."

When this part of the program is carried out—and with the main Polish armies undefeated and fighting hard that may take longer than Göring suggests—Germany proposes to approach the Western powers, perhaps with friendly, neutral Mussolini as intermediary. With olive branches almost disguising its bayonets it will ask in tones of gentle reason: "Why should we go on fighting? Now that this Polish question is settled, why should there be more bloodshed? We want nothing from France, and an understanding about the colonies with Britain should not offer any difficulties. Shake hands and we will guarantee your empires for twenty-five or fifty years."

From the German point of view a peace on these lines would be perfect. It would mean plenty of glory at cut-rate prices and achievement of the hegemony of Europe just as certainly as if Britain and France had been defeated in the field. The only difficulty is that the British and French have listened to this siren song before with dire results. This time they have grimly stopped up their ears and lashed their leaders to the mast.

In view of this lack of response the Nazis are now attempting a new tactic. If we cannot undermine the whole allied front, they appear to argue, perhaps we can divide it. Consequently we have Göring breathing scorn at Britain while treating France to soothing syrup. "We want nothing of the French," he said on Saturday: "If Daladier will not believe this, that is his affair. It is the

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English government which incites people. We know England will fight to the last Frenchman—remember that, you Frenchmen."

There is no sign that propaganda on these lines is having any effect on Anglo-French firmness. The British press has unanimously declared: No peace with Hitlerism! The British government followed Göring's bombast with the announcement that it was proceeding with its plans on the basis that the war might last three years. The French army is methodically going ahead with its testing of the Siegfried Line; British troops are already in France, and unification of command has been achieved.

Under these circumstances the Nazi "peace" offensive would seem foredoomed unless it can succeed in rallying those elements in Britain and France which have rendered such devoted service to Hitler in times past. But in both countries the Munich groups have been disorganized, and any nuclei that remain are finding it necessary to keep remarkably quiet. The one danger that remains is provided by the continuance of M. Bonnet at the French Foreign Office. In this connection it may be significant that P. J. Philip of the New York *Times,* who so often reflects Bonnet's views, cautiously indicated in a recent dispatch the line which the Municheers might take toward definite German overtures. A German peace offensive supported by Italy would, he wrote, "find a great many sympathizers among those who have not yet gone through the transition of Prime Minister Chamberlain from the days of Berchtesgaden to this afternoon's speech in the House of Commons. There will be those who will consider that peace will be worth purchasing at what Herr Hitler will undoubtedly seek to make appear a reasonable price." It is a fair guess that Bonnet is prominent "among those" prepared to argue on these lines. Consequently those who feel that no true peace can be made with Hitler must hope that the French rumors of a new Foreign Minister are correct. The removal of Bonnet to a less important position, failing his retirement from public life altogether, would have as tonic an effect as did the appointment of Churchill to the British Cabinet.

American Neutrality

UNOFFICIAL word that Congress would be called into session, presumably early in October, to consider revision of the Neutrality Act followed closely on the heels of a series of emergency Administration steps designed to keep the United States out of the Second World War. In addition to issuing two separate neutrality proclamations—one in accordance with international law and the other as required by the Neutrality Act—the President unexpectedly proclaimed a "limited national emergency" in order that he might have the power to strengthen the national defenses. Orders were published calling for an increase in the army, navy, marine corps, and national guard, as well as for an expansion of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to deal with spying and foreign propaganda.

In issuing two separate neutrality proclamations the President sought to dramatize the inconsistency of America's position with respect to the war. The first reflected our determination to remain out of war, a possibility which is not irreconcilable with our desire for an ultimate Allied victory. The invoking of the Neutrality Act, on the other hand, threw the weight of American policy on the side of Hitler. Already its effects are apparent. Approximately half of the 1,400 planes ordered in this country last spring by England and France have been held up by the decree. Another 1,500 have been ordered subject to cancelation if the embargo is not lifted.

The President has been outspoken in declaring that application of the arms embargo amounts to strengthening Hitler's hand. By allowing ordinary commercial credits and short-term obligations to be extended to belligerents, he has gone as far as his discretionary powers under the act permit to make the burden on the Allies and American business as light as possible. In taking this action the President appears to recognize what should now be clear to everyone—that we shall have to aid England and France by all means short of war. Defeat for the Allies would seriously undermine American security. It would bring Hitler and Hitlerism to our very door. Realistically analyzed, our choice is not between aiding or not aiding Britain; it is whether we are to send ample material aid now or by restricting this aid increase the likelihood of sending men later. For unless we can provide sufficient supplies to hold Hitler in check in the West, the pressure for American participation may well become irresistible.

Mr. Roosevelt has made it clear that the repeal of the arms embargo is imperative. Reports from Washington indicate that a majority in both houses will support the Administration on this issue, although Mr. Borah's statement may be taken as a warning that there will be a bitter fight. For the moment the problem of credits is not a serious one. The Allies can mobilize several billions in foreign exchange for the purchase of needed supplies. But when these are exhausted, the only means of maintaining the flow of goods would be loans through the RFC and the Export-Import Bank, which are not prohibited by either the Neutrality or the Johnson Act.

That Mr. Roosevelt is sincere in saying that he believes America can remain out of the war is shown by the moderate nature of his emergency defense program. The navy is to be increased gradually from 120,000 to 145,000 men; the army is to be expanded from 120,000 to 227,000 men; and the national guard is to be strengthened from 190,000 to 235,000. Additions of this size would be meaningless in preparation for entering the

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European war. They are entirely adequate for strengthening America's defenses against an attack from abroad. Mr. Roosevelt has cleared the ground for a realistic and vigilant foreign policy for the United States.

War Chronicle

September 1 to September 12

EASTERN FRONT: Since the opening shot of the war, fired on September 1 at 5:11 a. m. from the "visiting" German battleship Schleswig-Holstein in the harbor of Danzig, the German armies have conquered one-third of Poland. The Polish high command and neutral observers assert that the bulk of the Polish army is intact and is taking up a position behind the rivers Vistula, Bug, and San. If these assertions can be relied upon, the Polish army should be able to halt the German advance, at least temporarily.

Western Front: French troops have occupied German parts of the no man's land between the French and German fortifications preparatory to an attempt to break through the Siegfried Line. They have repulsed German counter-attacks. If they succeed in breaking through—a task which may take weeks—the Germans will be forced to evacuate the Rhineland, at least as far as the Moselle, and it is very doubtful whether they could then hold the northern part of the Rhineland. It is probable that a second French-English drive will soon be made to test the German fortifications across the Rhine near Basle and develop, if successful, into a major action.

In the Air: Germany has demonstrated in Poland the bombing capacity of its air fleet. It has also tested high-explosive and incendiary bombs by destroying entire towns, at the same time giving notice to the British and French of what they may expect in the West. Until now there has been comparatively little activity in the air on the western front, except for the English leaflet raids on German territory, which have probably had more effect in bolstering British morale than in weakening that of Germany, and minor air maneuvers in connection with the movements of the French army in the Saar basin. We may assume that France and Britain are still in process of completing their anti-aircraft defenses before attacking the German hinterland and provoking reprisals against London and Paris. An attempt to destroy the Rhine bridges from the air is to be expected soon in connection with French-English land actions in that region.

On the Sea: The English and French navies have blockaded Germany with a thoroughness achieved only toward the end of the war of 1914-18. German merchant ships have already been swept from the seas. Only in the Baltic are German ships and the German fleet still safe. The sinking of the Athenia was the beginning of German submarine warfare, and Germany has announced that it will use "every means" to prevent war materials and food from reaching Britain.

Home Front: In France and England complete unity has been achieved. Even local fascists and the Communists support the announced war aim of smashing Hitler. No sign of appeasement is visible anywhere, though it may still lurk in the breast of Bonnet. Both France and England know, if not what they want, at least what they don't want. They also know what they are up against. It is different in Germany. It is reported that German troops in Poland know nothing of the war in the West or of the declaration of war by France and England. The German people only now are beginning to realize the seriousness of the situation. For the first week of the war the slogan of the German high command was "All quiet on the western front," though in that week it lost some 200 square miles of German territory. The propaganda has been designed to make the German people believe that a quick general peace will follow the "punitive action" in Poland. Reports of anti-war reactions in Germany must be discounted; opposition cannot be expected until Germany understands that Hitler's policy has maneuvered the Reich into a general war despite all promises to the contrary. The advantages of organization achieved in Germany by years of totalitarian rule have been reduced by the stern measures taken in all fields by the governments of France and England, which are today virtually military dictatorships.

Neutral Front: Of the twenty-eight European nations twenty-four are still neutral. In none of them is a desire for German victory apparent. Even in Italy, Spain, and Hungary, the so-called axis partners—the word axis was one of the first casualties of this war—there has been no spontaneous show of sympathy for Germany. The neutral countries wish to avoid being dragged into the war but realize that they must be prepared not merely to defend their neutrality but to resist German economic demands which will come when the blockade begins to be felt. Without gold or foreign currency Germany will be able to pay for raw materials only in promises, but Hitler will not take no for an answer. He may also believe that he can conquer Rumania and Yugoslavia before the French and English divisions can cross the Rhine. More than mere speculation on this point will be possible when Russia's attitude has become clear. Today Soviet policy remains the leading subject of controversy. Rumors which are characterized in French-British quarters as German propaganda say that a non-aggression pact between Russia and Japan will soon be concluded and that Italy will enter the war on Germany's side. In this connection the Fascist press in Italy is cooperating in the attempt to drive a wedge between the British and French, but, significantly, there has been no mention of the German-Italian alliance since the war began.

The American nations will discuss the many problems

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which the war presents for the Western Hemisphere at a conference to be held at Panama City on September 21.

Diplomatic Front: The Italian Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, has been conferring daily with the French and English ambassadors. Rumors of a French-Spanish treaty of friendship are circulating. Intensified conversations are going on among the Balkan neutrals; Italy is obviously trying to dominate the Balkan bloc in order to strengthen its own bargaining power; the Allies are working through Turkey to keep the bloc neutral. There is no news of the activities of the group of Russian officers in Berlin which the German press calls a military mission; the Russians say they are merely military attachés of the Soviet embassy. Göring, speaking to munitions workers on September 9, made peace overtures to France. The Germans are obviously preparing a campaign to separate the French and the British and at the same time are manufacturing alibis for the moment when the German people discover that they face a new world war.

Peace Front: Positive formulation of the war aims of the British and French is so far missing, but feeling is rising that the slogan "Smash Hitler" is not enough.

1939 Is Not 1914

By FREDA KIRCHWEY

THE impulse to consider the present war in Europe in the fading light of 1914 is irresistible to anyone old enough to remember the start of that struggle. And the tendency to find parallels is almost as strong. The recurrent rivalry between Britain and Germany, the antagonism of Teuton and Slav, the calculating aloofness of Italy, the threat of German absolutism, even the benevolent neutrality—to the Allies—of the United States, all have been reviewed in the past few weeks in phrases which too frequently obscure the facts that make the new war a unique struggle. For this tragedy, like all the great tragedies in history and literature, has elements common to every other, but a theme and an inner meaning belonging to it alone.

During this first week of war I have been reviewing the issues of *The Nation* for July and August, 1914. It has been an enlightening experience and has sharpened my sense of both the parallels and the divergences between the two struggles. In those days *The Nation* printed almost no signed articles; its editorial comment covered eight or more pages of close type, and included a careful summary of the week's news along with editorial paragraphs and leaders. Then as now it was deeply preoccupied with foreign affairs. I mention these facts to give added point to what follows.

An editorial in the issue of July 2 discussed the assassination of Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo. It said that while the incident undoubtedly had serious political implications "it is the personal aspect of the tragedy which first makes appeal. This new blow to the aged Emperor . . . evokes world-wide expressions of sympathy. . . ." Then it analyzed the political tensions which had been created within the empire, and in Serbia as well, by the forcible annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But the editorial concluded firmly that, in spite of the existence of this ill-will, Europe's chancelleries would be more concerned "with personal and dynastic changes which may follow in Vienna than with any possibility that Austria will be shaken out of her orbit. . . ."

A week later nothing bearing on the aftermath of Sarajevo was printed in *The Nation* except an eight-line news note on the funeral of the Archduke and Duchess. Two weeks later, on July 16, the leading editorial discussed the President's current difficulties with the Senate. The second editorial dealt somewhat humorously with Mr. Wilson's attempts to "woo big business." The third, called Rhapsody and Revolution, dismissed as foolish and disingenuous a recent theoretical attempt to swing the middle class to the support of labor and revolutionary change. The fourth strongly opposed the militarist propaganda of American army and navy men. The final editorial discussed the difficulties of making a useful census of the workers of the country. Not one word appeared about Europe or the tempest that was to sweep over it within two weeks.

On July 23, less than a week before Austria declared war, one short paragraph in *The Nation* discussed the troubles in Ulster; one, the fact that Albania was, for the moment, the *enfant terrible* of Europe. And that is all. Of the six long editorials, only one mentioned Europe; entitled Losing Our Scorn for "Abroad," it described the growth of tolerance in this country for Europe's ways of doing things! In this same number three "letters" from European capitals appeared. In London *The Nation's* correspondent discussed the acute Irish situation and the general problem of political leadership. The Paris letter described the neglected tombs and exhibits in the Pantheon. From Berlin came an account of increasing government pressure on the Socialists and the collapse of the charges against Rosa Luxemburg. These letters came by mail, but they were dated as late as July 12.

And in the next issue the imminent war was abruptly announced. An editorial, War Madness, described the rapid spread of excitement throughout Europe and the final exchange of notes between Austria and Serbia. But to me the most illuminating sentence is this one: "The shock caused by the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand was fully realized in this country [the United States], but the later dispatches gave us . . . very few premonitions of the sequel." That premonitions were few even in some places closer to the scene of conflict was indicated in a letter from London dated August 5,

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the day after war was declared, and printed in a later issue. A friend of the correspondent had the night before called upon a friend, "a woman of education" living in a suburb of London. He was surprised to find her completely calm. "His surprise became amazement when he learned that she was unaware that anything was happening out of the common. She had heard somehow that there was trouble somewhere in Europe between two of the powers, but did not know which."

Compare this summary of the state of mind that existed before August, 1914, with the record of the weeks and months just past. Read your back issues of *The Nation* since Munich, and before. Recall the warnings that have preceded and the "premonitions" that have followed each step in Hitler's implacable march toward the monstrous showdown now in progress. Recall the days of tension that lie just behind us, when whole populations waited hour by hour for some word on the air or in the press to say that at last Hitler was to be stopped.

Ever since 1914 historians have argued about the responsibility for the World War. Will they debate the causes of this war as long and as inconclusively? I don't think so. The new war has old causes. It has roots in the age-long desire of Germany to become a world power equal to Britain; it has fresher roots in the Versailles treaty, the last shreds of which are being trampled into the bloody earth of Poland. But its nearer causes lie in the Nazi doctrine of corrupt and despotic force. The power that crushed Austria and swept Czechoslovakia out of existence is the same power that has turned a million Jews into hunted exiles in their own lands and wiped out all the familiar, accepted forms of freedom. Hitler has invented a mythology more potent, as it is more fantastic, than the pan-German dream that led to the trenches of 1914. This sharp difference, riding above the surface likeness of ends and methods, stands out clearly as you read the story of the first days of the last war. The Kaiser was denounced as an absolute monarch in *The Nation* of 1914. But he tolerated parties and shared power with a parliament. The labor unions were strong; the Socialists controlled a large block of votes; and revolutionists ran into trouble only when they directly attacked the government. Read the story of Rosa Luxemburg's trial for a clear picture of the limitations on the Kaiser's "absolutism." No mania of race persecution dominated the first Reich. Its imperialism was based on honest greed—like that of England. And though the professors of the day rushed to support the cause of Germany in the first weeks of the war, they did it of their own mistaken will; they were not ordered to vote *Ja*. The blight of fascist coordination had not withered learning and free expression. Even the press said some of the things it thought. What existed in Germany was a lusty, ugly, grasping militarism backed by a strong, centralized state organization. What exists today is the same thing twisted into a monstrosity.

The outcome of the war must remain in doubt as one recalls the military picture in 1914 and compares it with that today. Then as now Italy's role was enigmatic. Its alliance bound it to Germany and Austria; but Austria was the old, long-hated enemy. *The Nation* on August 6, 1914, discussing Italy's attitude, recalled a story about Metternich. "There was talk of an alliance between England and Austria, and Metternich was asked if it might not be a good thing. He replied: 'Certainly. So might an alliance between a man and a horse. But it is important to know which is the man and which is the horse.'" Italy did not relish the idea of serving as Austria's horse twenty-five years ago, and it seems to shy from Germany's bit today. But it may well be that the Reich leads Italy with a firmer halter than the Triple Alliance proved to be. We shall know better when the center of struggle moves to the Western front.

In 1914 the German army was a magnificent military machine, far larger, better equipped, better trained, and better led than the French or British. Today, except in numbers, the situation is reversed. In 1914 the British navy was superior to the German; today it is vastly superior. But in 1914 Russia was a heavy force on the side of the Allies. Inchoate and poorly equipped, its sheer numbers held a great German army in action—until the revolution ended the war on the eastern front. Today the Allies have forfeited two strong armies: the army of Soviet Russia and that of the Czechoslovak state. The retreating Polish forces are a poor substitute for these—in spite of their desperate courage.

Feeling against Germany didn't exist before August, 1914. After the war began, general opinion in the United States held the Kaiser to blame for Austria's ruthless handling of Serbia. But it was not until the invasion of Belgium that anti-German feeling grew hot. And even then pacifist sentiment remained. To millions of Americans the great war was just another engagement in the unending struggle for power among the nations of Europe. *The Nation* believed in the guilt of the ruling group in Germany, but it opened its columns to vigorous dissent. Today we would have to go far to find the same opinions openly expressed. Even honest Socialists, like Norman Thomas, who stress the imperialist basis of the present struggle, make no effort to defend Hitler's Germany. Dissent is all but dead, here as in Europe. Pacifism is a small voice, and pro-German feeling is limited to the few pro-Nazis among us. Hitler had created an all-but-universal fear and hatred of the Nazi state years before his bombs fell on Warsaw. Every word he speaks now in behalf of peace carries the onus of every lie he has told in the past. He might better be silent and stick to his guns.

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Will Rumania Fight?

BY JONATHAN GRIFFIN

Bucharest, August 24

THERE were rumblings before the thunderbolt. Rumanian Foreign Minister Gafencu had been saying frankly for some weeks that a non-aggression pact between Russia and Germany was as good as signed. The articles which the German legation in Bucharest hawks around to the Rumanian newspapers, incessantly but for the most part in vain, struck a new note early in August when they said that Soviet Russia must surely find more affinity with the Third Reich than with capitalist and royalist England. In July the Turkish government had found that the Russians were no longer keeping it informed about the negotiations with France and Great Britain. Rumanians have not forgotten the years 1917 and 1918. They have not forgotten what the German occupation was like, and they are therefore as anxious as anyone to stop Hitler. But they also remember that Russian help was almost as bad as the German occupation and that it ended in desertion. This memory reduced not only the surprise but the dismay which the thunderbolt of August 22 caused in Bucharest. Everyone sees that Rumania's situation is serious; officials and ordinary people alike admit that, if left alone to face Germany's full strength, Rumania could not resist. But what most Rumanians want is to stop Hitler without Russian help.

Can it be done? That depends on Britain and France. If these two powers attempt it, Rumania's part will be important. For in Rumania lie the only large oil wells in non-Russian Europe. Hitler wants to get those oil wells, and to get them intact. He will therefore try to do without armed invasion—try to make Rumania, by simple threats, produce and deliver oil to meet his needs. As the owners of the oil, and others too, must be reluctant to destroy this great source of income, both private and national, there will be strong support for capitulation. But many Rumanians will see that Hitler's demands are bound to grow and grow, that he will send technicians to raise production, that the certain end of this will be a German occupation of Rumania, especially since Germany will soon be unable to pay for the oil. If at that point Rumania decides, with British and French help, to resist, it will be essential to defend Rumania effectively against invasion; should the defense be ineffective and the oil fields have to be abandoned, then destruction, however scientifically it was carried out, would deprive Hitler of the oil for only a few months. Could Rumania hold out against a large-scale attack from the axis long enough for effective assistance to arrive?

London and Paris have tended to think of Rumania as doomed. Many take this view because they remember that in 1918 Rumania was quickly overrun. They forget to ask what were the causes of that defeat and how far these still exist. The chief reason for the Rumanian defeat of 1916 was that the Germans were able to join the Bulgars and attack from the south. Today Yugoslavia stands in the way. The Bulgaria of 1916 had behind it a friendly Turkey; this spring the Turks threatened to attack Bulgaria if it attacked Rumania, and they might still do so—though I hear, as I write this, that there is talk of neutrality in Ankara. Above all, Rumania is now a different Rumania. The Rumania of 1916 was a little country of 7,500,000 inhabitants fighting a war on two fronts; the present Rumania has nearly 20,000,000 inhabitants, of whom a good 75 per cent are loyal and reliable. It has, therefore, twice as much manpower to defend only one front. It has also the whole of Transylvania through which to fight a delaying action on interior lines, before falling back to the Carpathians. And unless Turkey defaults, the Straits are open.

The Rumanians are of course inadequately equipped. As the mobilization of last March showed, they badly need uniforms and boots, airplanes and anti-aircraft guns. These are just the things that Great Britain this summer could not spare, and unfortunately the British would not let Rumania buy them elsewhere with British credit. Moreover, the extreme corruption of Rumanian politics, which had its origin in the practice of the Ottoman Empire of farming out the government to a succession of Greek tax-gatherers, made the French and British slow to give credits. If Rumania is to resist now, they will have to find the equipment for it, and quickly. Yet even in the matter of equipment Rumania is far better off than it was in 1916. In 1916 it mobilized 850,000 men but only 500 machine-guns. Today there are machine-guns in fair quantity and of the latest Czech type, and heavy artillery has been coming through from Skoda all summer under a secret clause of the German trade agreement. Some 350,000 men, by a conservative estimate, have first-rate equipment; the stocks of arms accumulated in the last war are in good repair; and the army is confident that it could hold up large-scale infantry attacks. About mechanized attacks there is less confidence, but a large part of the country is mountainous, wooded, and roadless.

What about morale? In the West most people think

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of the Rumanian as a poor fighter. The Germans do not. The Battle of Marasesti, in which Rumanian peasants defeated Mackensen by stretching their thin line out to take the place of company after company of Russian deserters, was one of the most heroic struggles of the first World War. It won Mackensen's praise; and a recent German military handbook also praises highly the courage of the Rumanian soldier. There was a time when Rumanian officers were as notorious for their corruption as for their corsets, but those officers were largely liquidated in 1917, and one does not see the type now. The agrarian reform has made the Rumanian peasants likely to fight even better next time than last, for many more of them actually own the land they will be defending.

King Carol

But what about the minorities? There are in Rumania some 1,600,000 Hungarians, about 9 per cent of the population. The agrarian reform appeased many of the peasants, but it made the expropriated landowners absolutely implacable. The Germans number about 700,000, or 4 per cent of the population. In Transylvania the Germans voted to be included in Rumania in 1918, but the rise of Hitler has turned the heads of the younger men. In the Banat and Bukovina they are still more solidly Nazi. They have been systematically organized—those of Bukovina by the German consulate in Cernanti. The Third Reich spent 40,000,000 lei on the Iron Guard in one election campaign. When King Carol visited London last year, the Germans blew up several bridges in Rumania. They tried to buy shares in the small Rumanian oil companies until the government decreed that all oil shares must be bought and sold through the National Bank. The Rumanian government has had to cancel most hunting licenses because the Germans were using them to amass firearms. Rumania is crawling with German agents, more than one of whom was active in Prague at the time of Munich.

There are more Jews than Germans in Rumania—about 5 per cent of the population. Rumanian anti-Semitism is old and deep-rooted, and the part played by the Jews in helping the German occupation of 1917 and 1918 intensified it. Since Rumania doubled in size at the end of the war, the needs of the new state absorbed the whole output of the universities for some fifteen years, during which time the Jews gained control of about half the country's commerce and industry; but after 1932 Rumanian graduates began to need jobs, and this at a time of economic crisis. A wave of anti-Semitism was therefore inevitable, and Hitler encouraged it. Goga's short-lived government deprived about 300,000 Jews of Rumanian citizenship, but most of them are getting it back, and it is thought that only about 75,000 of them—immigrants from Galicia at the end of the war—will be left disfranchised. Last March, during the mobilization, even the Jews deprived of citizenship joined up with enthusiasm. Germans and Hungarians were then also called up, but there were many desertions—in Arad there was fighting, and the Hungarian flag was raised. This August few Germans or Hungarians are being called up, and those few are mostly set at semi-civilian work. In fact, the minorities in Rumania are a limited weakness, closely watched.

A greater weakness is the corruption and inefficiency of Rumanian public life. The government is trying hard to end this—for instance, by replacing the political prefects with soldiers and by retiring many civil servants who owe their jobs solely to the spoils system. But the trouble still is that nearly all Rumanian officials are so underpaid that without *baksheesh* they and their families would starve.

In short, if Rumania joins the anti-Nazi bloc, it can perhaps hold out. But dare it try? If Russia is so far part of the axis as to attack or to let German troops through, then Rumania's position is hopeless, just as it was after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. And even if Russia stays neutral, the situation is dubious. There is a widespread distrust not only of Russia but of France and Great Britain as well. It began when the Allies promised in 1916 that General Sarrail would help Rumania by taking the offensive from Salonika; Rumania went to war but the offensive never materialized. Again many Rumanians feel bitterly toward the Poles for having betrayed the Czechs. For these reasons, and because for a small power defeat would mean extinction, Rumania is certain to try for "neutrality."

But that is not the last word. The peasants of Rumania know which side they are on. They are so anti-Nazi that on the rafts that float down the Bistrita River they use the word "Hitler" as a term of abuse which they shout from raft to raft. What is more, at the great testing-time in September last year the Rumanians had the courage to stand by the Czechs although they were worse equipped than they are now. They even had the integrity, when Colonel Beck came to Galati to invite them to join in the partition of Czechoslovakia, to send him home with a flea in his ear, refusing to take the Rumanian villages of Ruthenia even though these asked to be taken. If not now, then on the day that the spirit of liberty splits apart the great totalitarian empires as a growing tree can split a wall, these facts will be vital.

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Maverick Defies the Mob

BY GEORGE LAMBERT

San Antonio, September 7

STATEMENT by Maury Maverick, mayor, on the subject of civil liberties in San Antonio:

> Background of particular case: Emma Tenayucca, a Communist, has made application for a permit to use the municipal auditorium. The permit has already been granted.
>
> Because the Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of speech, right of peaceable assembly; and because the Fourteenth Amendment of our Constitution says specifically that no states "shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens," and further says that all persons are guaranteed due process of law, as well as equal protection under the law, . . . the permit is hereby affirmed. (Signature.)

Statement by A. J. Drossaerts, Archbishop of San Antonio:

> Our people may well wonder if our city authorities, in renting the municipal auditorium to that persistent propagandist of communism Emma Tenayucca, have forgotten that, after all, self-preservation is the first law of nature. . . . Playing with a rattlesnake is ever done at the fool's risk of the fool's life.

Statement by Herman G. Nami, spokesman for a joint committee of San Antonio veterans' organizations opposing the Communist meeting:

> Veterans do not recognize that Communists have any standing at all. If you notice a rattlesnake, you are not going to pick it up and see if a poison sac is in its mouth. You will knock it in the head, and we feel the same way about communism.

Statement of the County Commissioners, Bexar County, Texas:

> There is no place in Bexar County for a Communist Party of San Antonio.

Statement of the Floresville, Texas, Post No. 38, American Legion:

> We pledge support to San Antonio veterans' organizations even to the extent of joining veterans' organizations physically to prevent this meeting.

These statements appeared in San Antonio papers during the three weeks following the granting of a permit by the city of San Antonio to the Communist Party for the use of a wing of the municipal auditorium for a meeting on August 25. On that night a mob of more than 8,000 broke through a cordon of 180 policemen using tear gas and fire hose to keep them back and smashed into the auditorium. Some seventy-five persons who had entered the building to attend the meeting had fortunately been evacuated through a side door by the police before the mob, shouting "Lynch the reds," could reach them. Led by a Catholic priest, a Jew (the commander-elect of the American Legion post, who was later congratulated personally for his part in the riot by Nicholas Rodríguez, leader of the Gold Shirts of Mexico), a Ku Kluxer, and a former Republican candidate for Governor, the mob, which was largely made up of youths between sixteen and twenty-five, held a mass-meeting in the auditorium. To the accompaniment of fascist salutes and shouts of "Down with Maverick," "Tear down his house," "Ride him on a rail," speakers denounced the Mayor. They said: "Mayor Maverick is the only man in San Antonio who has stooped so low as to champion the cause of communism"; and "When they told you it was necessary to turn this auditorium over to the Communist Party or be in contempt of the Supreme Court, they didn't tell you the truth. When they joined the Communist Party they wrote themselves out of the Constitution, and they aren't entitled to free speech or anything else."

Afterward about 4,000 members of the mob left the city auditorium, leaving in their wake seventeen injured and damages amounting to more than $3,000. Led by Father M. A. Valenta, secretary to the Archbishop of San Antonio, they then paraded to the Alamo. Valenta with upraised hands alternately encouraged and restrained the vandals as they boarded passing cars and threatened to mob pedestrians who did not remove their hats as the flag passed by. At a street intersection a policeman pulled a gun and tried to stop the parade. Valenta walked toward him. The policeman was obviously afraid to shoot a priest. As Valenta reached him, the rioters closed in and took the officer's pistol and cap. The mob wound up the evening by hanging an effigy of Mayor Maverick in front of the City Hall, with a placard attached which read, "Hanged that Americanism might live." On the same night a band of fifteen hooded Klansmen appeared at Maverick's ranch just outside the city, but withdrew when they found he was not there.

During the hectic three weeks between the issuance of the permit for the meeting and the night of the meeting, Maverick carried on the fight for free speech in San Antonio virtually by himself. Not a single rabbi, priest, business man, labor leader, or prominent citizen raised a voice to support him. The organizations attacking him included the Catholic church, the Ku Klux Klan,

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the Elks, the Breakfast Club, all veterans' groups, and the Texas Pioneers. Newspapers in other Texas cities supported his stand for free speech, but San Antonio's papers joined in condemning him. Persons who wrote letters defending him to one of the San Antonio papers report that, although their letters were not printed, men representing themselves as war veterans asked them in threatening tones why the letters had been written.

Maverick is probably the only prominent political figure in the southern United States today who would not have backed down under such a barrage of criticism. His political opponents—San Antonio reactionaries and Texas reactionaries generally—have made the discrediting of Maverick their chief objective since he staged his amazing political comeback this spring and became Mayor of San Antonio. These reactionaries welcome Maverick's stand for free speech for Communists as the best possible weapon in their fight to ruin him politically and keep him from being a threat to the Garner Democratic machine in 1940.

That Maverick has been hurt politically in Texas and particularly in San Antonio by his stand for free speech is undeniable. He had been elected after a campaign in which his opponents claimed that the chief issue was "communism," represented by Maverick. Now they are saying, "I told you so." And to a large number of San Antonians, including some of those who voted for Maury, the fact that a public official would permit Communists to hold a meeting on public property or anywhere else is *prima facie* evidence that he too is either a Communist or so close to one that the distinction is not worth making.

The political motives of the rioters' leaders were noted by Don Politico, the widely read political commentator of the San Antonio *Light,* who said in his column on the day after the riot: "Now one thing impresses the Don considerably. Most of the active minor and major politicos he viewed at the demonstration have consistently been anti-Mavericks." Significantly, the leaders of the "anti-Communist" riot have since turned into leaders of a Maverick-recall movement which, though it can hardly succeed in removing him from office, can probably impair the success of his administration.

Three days after the riot the San Antonio newspapers announced that John Nance Garner would break all precedents and interrupt his vacationing in Uvalde to appear with Martin Dies at an "Americanism rally" in San Antonio sponsored by the local Elks. This left one inclined to wonder whether at least some of the instigators and leaders of the mob that wrecked the auditorium and hanged Maverick in effigy were not bent on delivering to Garner the solid Texas delegation at the next Democratic national convention rather than on saving San Antonio from the Communists.

Mexico Today

IV. THE DEEPEST DANGER

BY WALDO FRANK

STUDYING Mexico's dangers, we have moved inward from the largely fictitious threat of external fascism—independently unimportant so long as fascism has not conquered Europe—to the weakness of Mexico's own military, political, and economic structures. Now we come to the heart of the country's danger and of its hope—to the people. The reader will understand that many of the defects I note are defects of virtues.

I have named the doctrinaire rigor of the C. T. M. It is not absent from the constitution. As I entered the dignified reception hall of the Escuela Politécnica, I saw on a tablet on the wall a paragraph of the constitution (1917) dedicating the schools of the republic "to create in the youth a rational *and exact conception of the universe* . . ." (italics mine). This is sheer demagoguery, the kind of unconscious arrogance which inspired the fanatical extremes of the Cristeros. In villages north and south I have seen the poor teachers impose doctrines on the Indian children that meant even less to them than the Catholic catechisms which the priests once made them parrot. There is a lack of adequate teachers in Mexico. I suspect that the nature of the curriculum is one of the causes.

The spirit of Lázaro Cárdenas is so alien to this intemperate rigidity that it appears, at times, to go to the other dangerous extreme. Many good men attack his libertarianism as quixotic and as encouraging license. David Alfaro Siqueiros, for instance, the genial artist who commanded a regiment in Spain and now heads a school to renovate the methods of Rivera, which have fallen into the picturesque, and of Orozco, which he claims have become too introspective, says that Cárdenas runs the risk of Francisco Madero, whose faith in loving kindness fell before the murderous reaction of Huerta. Freedom of the press, says Siqueiros, is one

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thing; freedom for open plotters of counter-revolution is another. I confess that Cárdenas's methods often amaze me. I have seen in his *comitiva* dangerous enemies of the republic. Does he deem them less dangerous under his eyes, perhaps in office, than in the free wilderness of open enmity? The next year or two will tell whether he is right. No country in the world has a tradition of more violence than Mexico; yet there is no country where more freedom is granted to the fomentors of violence. And in no period of the country's history has violence been less common. If my hope is justified—that Cárdenas is weakening the forces of reaction by letting them speak and work in the open—and if a peaceful organic continuity succeeds his regime after 1940, even if at a slower pace, he will have contributed to the art of statesmanship a form as important as the contribution of Mexico's great fresco masters to the art of painting.

The Cárdenas plan is to give to Mexico a number of loosely autonomous organisms, predominantly agricultural, with the industrial, educational, and administrative bodies constellated about the *ejido*. This system is supposed to work by national intuition more than by an imposed method. The whole march of Mexico today is a largely unself-conscious intuition. The method is an agrarian syndicalism, new to the world and, I suspect, to the theorists. That is why able doctrinaires like Juan Marinello, the Cuban leader, distrust it; and why honest intellectual liberals like Alfonso Reyes, Mexico's first man of letters, fear for it. It is an organic order growing from within. I know that Cárdenas at least is conscious of it, for one day at length he explained to me its methods and his confidence in its future.

It is my duty to expose its dangers. This order is tentative, tender, subject to panic and deviation. If for any reason, for any length of time, it should fail to provide sufficient food and security for the people—because of the internal sabotage, the internal lack of discipline, and the international boycott of oil and money—this fragile order might succumb to demagoguery. No open foe of the revolution will prevail; a subtle traitor—who, for instance, advocated breaking the collective farms into small private holdings, the first step to the return of the *hacendados*—might fool the people.

There are dangerous traits in this people. The empire of the Aztecs was a loose, unstable control of economic exchange, with a prestige of success, something like the moral hegemony of the United States today. This empire must not be confused with political structures like Rome's or that of the Quechuas (the Incas), who forged a mighty social unit in what is now Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, and parts of Chile and Argentina.

Maya and Maya-Quiché, Zapotec and Toltec, to a lesser degree the Mixtec and the like, were Mexican nations with great cultures superior to the Aztec. But they were all decadent when the "foreign" Aztecs—probably around 1300—arrived from California. The Aztecs symbolized and stratified their decadence; for this was a sick people soon after it settled in Anáhuac. Its mixed cult of flowers and blood is one of the great pathologies of history—a more recent one prevails today in Germany. The Spaniards shrewdly profited by the unrest in Mexico and the resistance to the Aztecs; Cortés was a political more than a military genius. Now, for nearly three hundred years, a colonial slave culture distinct from Spain's lived literally *on* the Indian, reaching greatness in 1600, stabilized by 1700, rotten by 1800. The transformation of the Spanish arts by the natives indicates the almost somnambulistic life of the Indians in this period. But the Independence of 1800 brought them not reconquest but chaos. The great Zapotec President, Benito Juárez, merely reaffirmed this chaos, saving it from the further curse of the French invasion and establishing, if only in theory, the right of the Indians over their brutal church. Porfirio Díaz, a Mixtec mestizo who powdered and painted in order to appear white, clamped a carapace of artificial order—he called it scientific—over the chaos of Mexico. He ruined the lovely colonial capital with architectural monstrosities inspired by France; and then delivered up the land's wealth and the workers to a new scourge, American imperialism. Mexico's chaos, within this succession of historic traumas, writhed and groaned, bringing inevitable lesions to the sick, sensitive people.

The chaos is not past. It will take more than six years of rule by the first Mexican President with an organic sense of his people to overcome a disease already old when Cortés conquered, and rendered almost chronic by the succession of tragic centuries. The Mexican through his very capacity for joy, fruit of his sensibility, as we have seen, has become morbid—gifted and intelligent but morbid. His love has wound itself about his misfortunes, as does the thwarted, neurotic child's. In every Mexican there lives a masochist. He draws emotional satisfaction from pain; unconsciously, under the *alegría* which we have found in him, he defends the frustrations that bring pain, despite his conscious will to end them.

The Spaniard is traditionally gifted with the sense that life is tragic. This has made for his depth of vision, since human life *is* sacredly, eternally tragic. But in the Mexican this tragic sense, nourished by too much disaster, is often masochistically sustained.

Another danger: the Indian's nature—as I tried to make clear in my book "America Hispana"—differs essentially from the white man's in that the focus of his ego is collective. As I have also tried to show, it was the European's individualistic will emerging from the Middle Ages, not his intellect, that created the machine. To impose the machine interpreted by the white man's

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culture of the machine on Mexico will fail, because the Indian must reject what we imply as the machine's values. The machine's potential benefits must first be modulated into a form assimilable to both the Indian's group-ego and the Spaniard's personal will: for both coexist in the Mexican—whence his conflicts and his potential greatness.

This problem the Mexican intellectuals, oscillating between the psychological crudities of Russian Marxism and the softness of individualistic liberalism, do not realize. Doubtless a hint of the true process of assimilation lives in the intuitive agrarian syndicalism of Cárdenas. But Mexico is a long way from understanding the depth of the problem; Mexican literature—with the temporary exception of one or two men like José Vasconcelos, whose derangement into reaction is an intellectual tragedy for all America Hispana—appears to be barely conscious that the problem exists. (A few young men among the poets may, if they grow, refute this.) Meanwhile the lethal clouds of counter-revolution gather.

Mexico, profoundly Indian, is also profoundly Hispanic. And it inherits the Spanish weakness in creating social order, in organizing social justice. The founder of international law, a century before the Dutch Grotius, was the Spaniard Victoria: Spain ignored him. The greatest of all defenders of the Indian was the Spaniard Las Casas: Spain in her empire betrayed him. The Hispanic genius in the arts of personal expression has been supreme. But it is not by chance that Spain's best-known prophet of social justice is a mythical, thwarted, half-comic character named Don Quixote. The last years are proof that even now Spain has failed to transfigure this "ridiculous Christ"—the deepest character in all European letters—into a modern action. Don Quixote still comes to grief against the windmills.

Mexico is like a genius in its family of nations. It inherits *all* the family traits, good and bad, and all intensified. Mexico's life is precarious, because Mexico's promise is great.

But the regime of Lázaro Cárdenas is already an intrinsic cultural achievement for his people, for the Americas, and for the world. In Cárdenas Mexico has produced a major prophet deeply original in vision and in power. His motive is social health; his method is the method of the artist and apostle rather than of the conventional statesman. Whether, despite his far more practical mind, like Spain's Don Quixote and like Don Quixote's great forebear, Jesus of Nazareth, he will suffer crucifixion, I do not know. What is sure already is that Cárdenas has integrated in Mexico's ethos a new working tradition of justice. Perhaps reaction will write the next chapter, in Mexico as elsewhere. But that tradition will survive—and will create.

[*This is the last article in Mr. Frank's series on Mexico Today.*]

Hymn for New Jersey

By McALISTER COLEMAN

TO THOSE who for one reason or another think of New Jersey as no more than a bird-of-prey sanctuary devoted to the protection of such dubious characters as the late Dutch Schultz, the organizers of holding companies, and the disciples of Father Coughlin, there is a refreshing revelation of the true spiritual qualities of the state in the recent action of the legislature at Trenton. There is, of course, a crisis in the affairs of the Garden State. It is faced with what is euphoniously called "relief bankruptcy." Ways and means of raising enough money to keep the Jersey unemployed from starving to death on some of the most expensive highways in the country have plagued both houses at Trenton. How inspiring, then, to discover that even amid such storms and pressures the solons still find time to cultivate the flowers of poesy within their garden close. In short, the legislature offers a prize of cash money for the best official hymn celebrating New Jersey.

Already Jerseymen have for their official flower the violet, the inspiration for which was no doubt derived from the self-effacing qualities of the Honorable Frank Hague. They have their official flag. Up to now they have had no state-wide official hymn, though various sections of the state honor their local minnesingers. There is, for example, the unfortunately anonymous author of the Bergen County Song who in these stirring lines celebrates the environs of Hackensack, Ho-Ho-Kus, and Englewood:

> Bergen County, we're true to you,
> Nature loves you, we know that is true;
> Hillsides green,
> Woods serene,
> Here's where Colonel Lindbergh came
> To get him his queen.

But though Bergen is set apart not only by nature but also by certain parties interested in the now legalized pari-mutuel betting as the logical site for their initial venture, Bergen County is by no means the state.

It is evident that the official hymn must be far more than the average chauvinist ululation. Nothing short of an epic is required in the case of a commonwealth so uniquely favored by nature, the New Deal, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, which has already in New Jersey alone spent more than one-half of its funds paying off insured depositors in busted banks and making loans to other banks currently tottering toward mergers.

The aspiring hymnologist must first survey his material, in this instance surprisingly abundant. In the lean and quixotic figure of the Mayor of Jersey City there is the opportunity for a trumpeting prologue. Hague would

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enter to an opening chorus of pay-rollers, runaway sweatshop bosses, and salesmen for *Social Justice*. Here the Shelley touch is indicated:

> Heil to thee, blithe spirit!
> Broke thou never wert . . .

The Mayor could then rhythmically introduce the other member of his axis, the Honorable Harold Hoffman, former Republican governor, now slated for reelection with the warm approval of the vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee and New Deal enthusiast, Frank Hague. (Fortunately the hymn-writer need not explain the origin of that remarkable politico-schizophrenic, the Hague Republican.) Now Happy Harold has himself been to Parnassus, and a quotation from his masterpiece "Where's My Daddy?" which he wrote for the National Safety Congress, may be taken as the Hoffman theme song. It runs in part:

> A cheery little home with glistening window panes,
> Outdoors—the early gloom, wet and chilly rains.
> . . . . . .
> Coffee steaming hot; a happy youngster's cry.
> Breakfast for the three—as love stands by.

With the approach of heavy-footed tragedy (for as you may have guessed that happy home is to be stricken ere "the evening shadows creep darkly o'er" by the loss of Daddy, who, apparently driving his car "under the influence," was smacked amidships by a truck) it becomes necessary to supply the comic relief. This will be furnished by the introduction of the McFeely clan of Hoboken, who have just signed a new contract for the removal of the city's garbage. To all save the taxpayers of Hoboken, who by now have filled the coffers of Mayor McFeely and his fellow-garbagemen to the extent of more than a million dollars, the McFeely interlude should prove hilarious.

The exaltation of Jersey justice is next in order, and here, indeed, the most accomplished pen might falter. With what pomp and circumstance does one portray the elevation of the heir apparent, Frank Hague, Jr., to the state's most important tribunal—proof positive, if one were needed, that ignorance of the law is no bar to judicial eminence. Historical reference might be made to the dignity with which such famous cases as the Hall-Mills and the Hauptmann murder trials were conducted, together with short poetic mention of the famed decision of the Vice-Chancellor to the effect that if scabs wanted to go to work there was obviously no labor trouble and therefore no excuse for pickets.

It is to be hoped that, charmed by the music of the official hymn, the underfed unemployed, the overburdened taxpayers, and the overcharged consumers may rest more contented with their lot and gratefully continue in office those representatives whose vigilance on behalf of culture in New Jersey has once more been shown.

Everybody's Business

The Boom Is On

NOW we know what it takes to inspire business confidence and bring risk capital out of the funk-holes into which it has allegedly been driven by the New Deal. War in Europe has cured the speculators of their sulks and started them in full cry after profits. Their thought is that, even if the present neutrality-law ban on arms shipments is maintained, foreign countries will still be in the market for vast quantities of metals, steel, machinery, oil, foodstuffs, and other commodities, and in their desperate need will gladly pay through the nose. And of course domestic consumers, remembering the last war and fearing shortages, can also be induced to pay higher prices. Already we have news of housewives attempting to stock their larders and of wholesale quotations for foodstuffs rising sharply, while large holders of such commodities as sugar and leather have withdrawn from the market and are sitting on their supplies waiting to see how far prices will go up.

On Sunday, September 3, the President in his solemn radio address to the nation said: "I cannot prophesy the immediate economic effect of this new war on our nation, but I do say that no American has the moral right to profiteer at the expense either of his fellow-citizens or of the men, women, and children who are living and dying in the midst of the war in Europe." Next morning Wall Street, disregarding sentimental nonsense of this sort, went wild. Stocks with any conceivable war equity bounded up points at a time, and nearly all commodity quotations advanced the permissible limit, with hosts eager to buy and few willing to sell.

This boom may seem strange in view of the fact that every war scare in the past two years has caused weakness on the Stock Exchange. But that weakness has been largely due to selling by investors who remembered what happened at the beginning of the last war or felt that uncertainty was the worst thing for business. All through the summer liquidation due to these causes has been going on. On the day Germany marched into Poland the market opened weak, anticipating increased selling. When this failed to appear, speculators took it as a signal to jump in with both feet. A further encouragement to the bulls was the mobilization by the Allied powers of American securities belonging to their nationals, thus insuring that there would be no dumping from that source.

During the Labor Day week-end amateur and professional operators everywhere began to see visions, and orders poured into the brokerage offices. The boom was on, with the action of commodities inflaming the stock market and vice versa. After the first hectic day trading quieted somewhat and profit-taking checked the upward rush of prices, but it is likely that we have as yet seen merely the beginning of a new war bull market.

How far is this sudden blowing up of values justified, and what will be its consequences? So far speculative arguments are being based rather on what happened twenty-five years ago than on the facts of today. It is just as well to remember that Britain and France, which are supposed to

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furnish the orders on which the war boom will be based, are much better prepared than in 1914. Both have large stocks of many essential materials and need not be cornered into paying hold-up prices. Moreover, in their economic organization for war they are starting where they left off in 1918. Rationing is being introduced from the start. Domestic stocks and prices are being rigidly controlled, and there will be no competitive bidding by importers for supplies as there was at the beginning of the last war. Moreover, while in 1914 world stocks of many basic commodities were rather below normal, today the long depression and the drive toward autarchy in many countries has led to the piling up of surpluses. Take wheat, for example. Only a few weeks ago there was so much wheat in sight that prices sank to their lowest point in centuries. The advent of war caused sellers to withdraw and sent prices shooting upward. But there is no reason to suppose that the war will result in an abnormal consumption of wheat in those countries in a position to buy in overseas markets or that existing stocks will rapidly melt away. The same is true of sugar, of which Britain, incidentally, now grows from a quarter to a third of its requirements, whereas during the last war it was wholly dependent on imports.

In the case of other commodities, too, America no longer occupies the predominant position it did twenty-five years ago. Since the last war immense resources of copper have been developed in Rhodesia and Canada, and the former, at any rate, are capable of very rapid expansion since output has been deliberately restricted in recent years. In regard to oil the situation is more favorable from the American point of view, for this country is still by far the greatest producer in the world, and the military need for oil has increased immensely. However, stocks are large and productive capacity is enormous, and the restrictions on private motoring which have already been enacted not only in the belligerent countries but in most neutral European states will partly offset the war demand.

Under these circumstances any runaway market in basic commodities seems entirely unjustified. It will seriously disturb our own economy, add to the cost of living, and put a brake on the normal recovery which was developing before the war broke out. It is to be hoped that the government will not hesitate to use the many controls at its disposal to prevent all speculative excesses. It should, for instance, be prepared to release stocks of commodities which it holds if an attempt is made to create artificial scarcities.

The arguments used here are not meant to imply that the war will not act as a temporary stimulant to our economy. Almost certainly it will bring increased orders to many industries, the effects of which will be magnified by new capital investment undertaken as a result of or in expectation of such orders. Business confidence will probably revive in many fields not directly connected with war goods, for that tender plant feeds on the hope of rising prices and flourishes in the hot sun of speculation. But we have an immense amount of slack to take up, and our economic troubles are not going to be cured overnight. And however much temporary economic benefit we may gain from Europe's tragedy, it must almost inevitably be at the expense of increasing the unbalance of our economy and adding new problems to those which a war boom may shelve but cannot solve. KEITH HUTCHISON

In the Wind

THE BITTERNESS of John L. Lewis's attack on F. D. R. last week may have startled newspaper readers but came as no surprise to intimates of the labor leader. According to these sources, Lewis is not only critical of important White House policies but has voiced definite—if still private—hostility to a third term.

FROM VIENNA via London comes this story of the newest affront suffered by the celebrated Viennese Philharmonic Orchestra. It is said that when Göring last visited Vienna, Nazi aides there decided to have the orchestra play at the restaurant where he was to dine. Playing in a restaurant was bad enough, but Göring himself delivered the final blow. At the height of the performance he sent word to the orchestra leader to "tone down the music" because it was interfering with his conversation.

FIRST TYPOGRAPHICAL tragedies of the war: The New York *Sun,* commenting on Göring's elevation to Hitler's newly formed Defense Council, pointed out that he had held a long list of important posts, including "Premier of Russia." . . . The New York *World-Telegram* reported at the time of the pre-war crisis that Hitler's "face is always serious" but his "entire attitude is one of claim."

THE *NEW LEADER,* Social Democratic Federation weekly, is circularizing the 400 liberals who published a statement just before the German-Russian pact listing "ten major differences" between the two countries. It is asking if they have changed their minds. . . . The outbreak of war in Europe may have stopped General George Van Horn Moseley's rise as a native fascist leader; the War Department, it is reported, has told him to keep quiet. . . . The FCC is investigating the action of the Detroit radio station WJR in barring an anti-Coughlin speaker from the air. . . . The Workers' Defense League is planning to distribute 500,000 copies of a leaflet denouncing Paul McNutt as the "Hoosier Hitler" and attacking his Presidential ambitions.

TWO MORE blows were struck last week in the war between Heywood Broun and Roy Howard. The Scripps-Howard *World-Telegram,* which runs Broun's column, carried a cartoon on the plight of "parlor pinks" as a result of the German-Russian pact; the figure in the cartoon was an unmistakable caricature of Broun. Three days later *Broun's Nutmeg* carried on its front page a column which the *World-Telegram* had rejected. (Roy Howard has frequently insisted that he never interferes with his columnists.)

LAST WORDS on appeasement: When Britain momentarily delayed declaring war on Germany, a well-known American journalist commented: "If Chamberlain sells out Poland the way he sold out Czechoslovakia, I'll never speak another word of English."

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind —either clippings with source and date or stories that can be clearly authenticated. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

London Black-out

London, September 4

CRIMINAL lunacy on the one hand and almost incredible ineptness and weakness and diplomatic folly on the other have brought about a new World War. No man today can foresee when or how it will end, or what it will produce. We only know that another deadly train of events has been started. Whether the present capitalist system or, indeed, civilization itself will survive this struggle depends chiefly on how long it lasts. Stanley Baldwin told a group of London business men and bankers in 1935 that if another war of nations took place there would be "few of our stripe left." And what of the rest?

Today we can only see clearly how unnecessary the resort to arms is. Its coming has been carefully prepared ever since 1931—yes, ever since 1919 and the Treaty of Versailles—and was made inevitable by Munich and the subsequent handling of international affairs. It is too early to pass judgment upon what happened in the last seventy-two hours. As at the same stage in 1914, there are points still to be cleared up. Why did the French seek to delay matters at the end; was the published explanation that France needed more time to perfect its preparations the proper one? Why was the expiration of its ultimatum set for a different hour from that of England? Just how far did Mussolini go with his five-power-conference proposals? Why was Parliament so obviously in bad temper with Chamberlain on Saturday and so angry that he postponed until Sunday the announcement of a state of war? Was there perfect cooperation between Warsaw and London? These are things upon which we need more light.

But whatever the record, the Allies start with the moral initiative. Theirs is the righteous cause; they were willing to negotiate; the records show that Hitler went to war lying and in haste. The horrible odium of having produced this war is his. Certainly the blood of all who die on either side will rest on this man's head. If fate wills that the doctrines of so unspeakable a monster shall triumph, then decency and morality and justice and humanity will be at an end in Europe.

Certainly this war by itself will cure nothing. If the Allies win and repeat Versailles, the consequences will be even worse than before. The danger will be that the desire to make impossible another recurrence of this struggle will create an irresistible demand for exemplary vengeance. Already one hears talk of the necessity of separating North Germany and South Germany once and for all. Hence it is gratifying to find in today's London *Times* an appeal from Dr. Maxwell Garnett, formerly secretary of the League of Nations Union, for an immediate statement of England's actual war aims—without, let us hope, any secret treaties in the background—and for them to be so shaped that a genuine new world order will arise. To this is added a demand from A. A. Milne that England continue to differentiate between the German people and the German government, precisely as was done, notably by President Wilson, in the last war. These are hopeful signs. Will they disappear as the horrors of the war pile up, as grief and rage at the losses warp men's minds? Surely the Germans have set a swift pace by the abominable sinking of the Athenia.

All these things lie in the future, behind the most awful of clouds, the darkest of nights. The mind cannot today forecast; it merely reviews the years 1914-18 in tortured night hours and wonders what greater horrors we shall see. My only relief is to watch what is going on under my eyes here in London. For what I see is wonderful—a calm, a resolution, a resignation, a certainty of the right that compel one's complete admiration. I should unqualifiedly say that this is humanity at its best did not one thought force itself upon me: if these indomitable people would only bring their great qualities to bear upon their government and foreign policy and demand greater and wiser statesmanship, such calamities would not befall them. As I sat in Parliament on Friday, September 1, to hear Chamberlain announce that war was at hand unless the Germans accepted his ultimatum—and he was sure, he said, that they would not—I could not help recalling how many such fateful scenes had taken place in that historic chamber, how many times English leaders had ordained there the deaths of multitudes of their fellow-citizens because of their own stupidities and blunders or in order to carry on imperialistic policies of their own, long since pilloried by history.

It was a scene to remember as long as I live. Yet I believe I have seen in that very House of Commons moments of greater excitement, of more profound emotion. Mr. Chamberlain spoke earnestly, sincerely, at times passionately in his justified indignation. Munich was far behind him. Yet neither his address nor those of Arthur Greenwood for Labor and Sir Archibald Sinclair for the

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Liberals sounded emotional depths, nor did the last two stir their Parliamentary hearers to more than perfunctory applause. It was all over in twenty-five minutes. And it left me far from feeling that I had witnessed one of the most fateful scenes in all history; I have surely, at other times, seen a larger attendance of members—perhaps a number are already in service—and the London *Times* was incorrect in saying the galleries were crowded, for the side galleries were in the main empty.

As for the public at large, whether it is stunned, or numbed by the months of expectancy of the worst, or lacks imagination, or is trained to accept what its political leaders hand down to it, or whether it is inspired by a glorious courage and traditional faith, its attitude moves you to tears. I was near tears when I visited two stations to watch the evacuation of the children, and saw the quiet, unobtrusive sorrow of the mothers saying goodby. For the children it was a grand excitement—no more school and an adventure in the country. I wondered once more whether we should honor the Wright brothers for teaching us to fly or bewail their fatal invention of a machine which brings death to whole populations.

Fifteen minutes after I heard Neville Chamberlain announce over the radio that a state of war existed, the sirens screamed and people ran for the air-raid shelters. At the first one I came to, it was "women and children first"; the second, near my hotel, was full, so I sat outside, convinced that it was a trial alarm. Soon after the "all's well" we had another alarm. Last night I was waked at 2:45 a.m. with the insistent demand that I descend to the cellar at once, and when I refused to hurry a porter came for me: "It's orders, sir." So there we sat in a cellar hallway, in all kinds of costumes, with gas masks on laps (except a few of us), but everybody calm and cheerful and no one showing any trepidation. Indeed, in the daytime the only persons to show concern are the mothers whose children are still here—far too many remain in the city. The spirit of cooperation is really wonderful; everyone wants to do his or her share, and everyone is so courteous that it seems quite unnecessary to post signs telling what constitutes good manners in an air-raid shelter!

The streets are full of new constables; all, old and new, wearing "tin hats," the new men still in "cits" but with armbands. There are innumerable new auxiliary firemen, fine-looking fellows in dark blue uniforms, and a thousand taxicabs have been supplied with trailers and transformed into quite powerful fire-engines equipped with axes, hose, rope ladders, and the like. There are air-raid-protection wardens galore. Every other car has a sticker to show that it belongs to the fire service, or A.R.P., or the transport or evacuation branches. Signs everywhere call for volunteers to fill the sandbags—millions must have been filled already. The sky is full of beautiful silver-gray balloons, the "balloon barrage" that is counted on to entangle any invading aircraft in the steel cables which hold them in place. At least fifty can be seen from my window as I write. Nothing else is overhead; not an airplane ever passes.

If there is much to cheer and hearten, if the thoroughness of the organization is astounding, if there is every evidence that England begins this war as far along as it was, say, in 1915, and even later as to conscription, ominous signs of what is to come are on every hand. You cannot help starting when you read the placards telling you where to get gas masks for "children under two." You get a shock when you unexpectedly pass a first-aid station and read the notice, "Walking casualties this way." And you cannot get used to seeing store windows blocked out by sandbags or completely boarded over. But what moved me most was a visit to a great 700-bed hospital from which every patient who could be moved has been moved. All its scientific work has stopped; its whole life has been made over; and here it stands, empty but in such complete readiness that it gives you a sinking at the pit of your stomach: in the front hall are thirty tables for the first to come, with a huge morgue not far away. It was night when I visited it, and the building of course was dark. The chief nurse radiated joy over the completeness of everything—even over the rubber boots the staff will wear when the gas cases come in.

Two kindly surgeons took me up on the roof. There was London in the dark—incredibly more majestic, more thrilling than by day or with its usual lights; more mysterious, more questioning of the why and wherefore. A hundred feet above the street, we could see only a few light spots and the faint, will-o'-the-wisp lights of buses and motors. "I wonder," I said to myself, "whether London has been as dark as this since Will Shakespeare walked the Strand." My astonishment never ends that I walk the streets of London with a shaded flashlight to find my way as if I were on a Berkshire hill. I wonder if I too should be able to pilot a car through the dark with only parking lights and those well wrapped, while the "Stop" and "Go" greens and reds and ambers have shrunk to little shaded crosses. Every night not London alone but all England down to the smallest village is blacked out. Just now every place of amusement is closed. Piccadilly Circus is as quiet as a hamlet in Kent. And in these black and murky streets everybody is eager to help everyone else, to put the stranger in the right bus, on the right road.

"We shall win," said my doctor friends on that hospital roof. To the west tremendous flashes of lightning, the rumbling of thunder gave just the atmosphere the moment called for. "We shall win," said the doctors, "because every man and woman in this hospital is at his or her post in the dark—quiet, determined, efficient, prepared for the worst, uncomplaining, certain that we shall win in the end. And as they are, so is England."

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BOOKS and the ARTS

Has Democracy a Future?

DEMOCRACY—TODAY AND TOMORROW. By Eduard Benes. The Macmillan Company. $3.

AT A time when 10,000,000 men are under arms and the guns are roaring, when even in the democracies dictatorial power has been bestowed upon governments, it is not easy to indorse the conclusion of Dr. Benes that "the meaning and the importance of the World War will be characterized as an advance of democratic, equalitarian, humanistic, and pacifistic spirit in the history of Europe and the world." And yet strange as this statement sounds today, it may be the truth of tomorrow.

Nowadays more books are written on democracy than ever before, and in the multitude of words the clear conception is being drowned. Dr. Benes offers in his book no definition at all, but democracy as defined by Lincoln in the Gettysburg address seems in his view to depend largely on the trinity of intellectual, economic, and political freedom. Lord Bryce wrote in his standard work that the defects of democracy can be redressed only by more democracy, which, however, can develop only in the atmosphere of free discussion. Modern democracy was really born in the conference between Colonel Rainboro and Cromwell's officers on October 27, 1647, when the former said: "I verily believe that the poorest man in England has the right to live his own life as the richest, and no one should be subject to a government on which he has nothing to say." This is why the late President Masaryk defined democracy as freedom of discussion, and it would be disrespectful to suppose that his most faithful collaborator attaches a different meaning to the term.

Two years ago, at the International Congress of Philosophy in Prague, Dr. Benes pointed to the outstanding problem of our age—the reconciliation of the trend toward collectivism with the growing desire of the individual for more personal and political liberty. As a counterpart to this problem Dr. Benes emphasizes in his book the question of "how to transform the political liberal democracy into a new kind of social and economic democracy." This is certainly the core of the problem, for the capitalist democracies would not have watched the growth of dictatorships with such composure and complacency had they not believed that Bolshevism was the only alternative to Hitler's and Mussolini's "capitalism."

From this historical and sociological perspective Dr. Benes explains the downfall of post-war democracies in Europe and sustains the hope of democracy in its struggle against "modern anti-democratic ideologies." I am afraid, however, that not everybody in this country will share the author's view that the World War was fought mainly to make the world safe for democracy. Even Dr. Benes points to the anti-democratic inconsistencies of the peace treaties.

The European post-war democracies suffered, as Dr. Benes shows, from a congenital defect. They were unprepared and immature. They had to destroy conservative survivals of the past. Both communism and an exaggerated fear of a communist revolution accelerated their downfall. Dr. Benes omits to stress, however, that the post-war democracies, with the exception of Czechoslovakia and Austria, were democracies only in name. Therefore little effort was needed to demolish their ramshackle structure. Dr. Benes himself emphasizes that pre-war pan-Germanism "was the negation . . . of the principles of democracy." In the Weimar republic "the democrats did not themselves live up to their ideal." Very little was done to change the pre-war mentality. Whereas the Socialist government successfully stifled the Bolshevik attempt, it gave Hitler every facility to write "Mein Kampf" in his cozy prison; and the democratic Prussian government that overlooked Hitler's private army put in an appeal to the Supreme Court in Leipzig against the coup d'état of the Prussian Junkers.

In a concise and scholarly chapter on modern anti-democratic ideologies the author expresses the view that "there is no political system but democracy which is capable of solving justly and rightly this eternal problem in human society." I think, though, that he pays too great a compliment to the illogical twaddle of "totalitarian" theories in calling them a return to medieval despotism as advocated by Hobbes and De Maistre, who at least believed in God and human dignity. Nor does the racial theory that the Nazis are supposed to have added to the German *Lebensphilosophie* deserve the serious discussion which Dr. Benes gives it. It is simply a misinterpretation of Gobineau, who argued the supremacy of the Germanic race but used his thesis as evidence for the superiority of the French people, because, as he wrote, "les Allemands ne sont pas d'essence germanique." Dr. Benes is correct in emphasizing that the racial theory is aristocratic, while "in theory communism is nearer to democracy." In practice, however, as recent events have proved, communism is not far distant from "aristocratic" Nazism.

No one can help being thrilled by the last chapter on the future of democracy. The author absolutely denies the possible coexistence of democracy and dictatorship—"Either one or the other of these regimes must disappear"—and he leaves no doubt about the inevitable final collapse of dictatorship. It may disappear by war, by revolution, or by both. In accordance with a general law of social evolution Dr. Benes hopes that, just as post-war revolutions developed a reactionary rule, the contemporary revolution, too, will develop a reaction against its own principles. This may, however, take some time. And though some reaction always succeeds a dictatorship, it is not necessarily democracy.

Certainly "a kind of United States of Europe will be in the end the only solution which can save Europe from complete and final collapse," but so far no sign is visible that "this exaggeration [of nationalism] will in the future kill the exaggerated nationalism." Dr. Benes quotes Grillparzer's pre-war slogan which said, "From humanitarianism via nationalism to bestiality." It took, as we know, nearly three

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centuries for Europe to reach this undesirable goal. We do not know how long the way back will take, but there is no sound reason to suppose that the millions obsessed of chauvinistic megalomania would be willing, immediately after another war, to follow Bentham's advice to count heads instead of smashing them. This seems as improbable as the materialization of Benes's ideal democratic leader, who combines "great intellectual culture and scientific erudition with keen intuition and instinct, quick action, and physical and moral courage."

In making this ideal the object of democracy Dr. Benes, the statesman, the ex-President of a republic, the chairman of the League of Nations, reminds me of the Abbé Lantaigne, one of the heroes of Anatole France, who, on being recognized, in spite of his laic garb, by a courtesan as a priest, mumbled to himself: "Tu es sacerdos in eternum." In spite of his having been a potent factor in European politics for twenty-five years and in spite of his having written a political book, Dr. Benes is still a professor. However, he is not a weathercock professor like many of his Nazi and fascist colleagues, who change their opinions with the wind of power, but a dauntless student of truth. By this professorial yet readable book he has again augmented the high esteem he enjoys as a philosopher, a statesman, and a typical representative of his homogeneous, democratic nation.

RUSTEM VAMBERY

Children of Lead

SOUTH OF JOPLIN. By L. S. Davidson. W. W. Norton and Company. $2.75.

THE worlds that make the United States are so varied and so numerous, so far apart in time and space, that to call the total by one name is to make an understatement on which many overstatements have been based. Every country has its variety of worlds of course, but the mere geographical range of the United States is almost unique. And for other reasons Paris and Brittany are less disparate than New York City and, say, the tri-state region south of Joplin, Missouri, the scene of this vivid book by L. S. Davidson, which reads like fiction but is in fact a realistic picture of one American world.

Miss Davidson grew up in the tri-state mining region, where her father was a mining engineer. It is peopled by "early Americans" with a scattering of Indians. All have been exploited by the mine owners, who have taken fortunes out of the lead and zinc mines that run like catacombs under the section where Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma meet. It is not a pretty world. The landscape is covered with chat mounds and the shacks of mining towns dead or alive. The Indians, most of them, have been cheated out of their rich mineral lands, and the other name for the inhabitants who are proud of their early American ancestry and still sing Elizabethan songs is the "children of lead." They live from lead and die from it, for silicosis and lead poisoning are the diseases of the district. And they are preyed upon by loan sharks, patent-medicine men, and company stores. To cap it all, the National Association of Manufacturers has done its ironic bit with full-page advertisements in the local papers bearing the slogan, "Americans Have More Because They Earn More: Two Billion People Envy You."

Miss Davidson had lived there as a child; she had taught there as a young girl. She went back again in 1935 in direct response to a postcard from an old prospector named Zeck, who is one of the main characters in "South of Joplin." The postcard, which arrived as Miss Davidson was leaving for a trip abroad, read: "I heerd you was acrossin' the pond. Ain't you afeard of the furriners? They air about to git us."

The "furriners" who were about to "git us" turned out to be the American Federation of Labor. A strike was on, and Miss Davidson, notebook in hand, watched the struggle, with occasional trips to New York, until she became convinced that even she, a native, had better get out.

The day she arrived in Picher, Oklahoma, tear-gas bombs flew and one union man was killed. There followed the whole sequence of the Mohawk Valley formula, with additions peculiar to the tri-state diggin's: the company union, the terrorization of "furrin" agitators by the "Hoods" (the Klan), martial law, burned shacks, and even more ingenious persecution of natives who joined the alien union. Meanwhile, the daily life of the tri-state district went on. For relief, but not much, there are frenzied revival meetings and the icy baptisms of undernourished children, a company picnic where for once the half-starved miners and their children might get a square meal and a company dance where the caller of the square dance yells:

> Ladies to the center, form a star
> Kill all furriners near and far.

Midway in the struggle the C. I. O. appeared, whereupon the Blue Card Union (company) joined the A. F. of L. according to the now classic pattern, the better to fight the new menace. We also get an insight into the attitude toward labor of the former candidate for President, Alf Landon.

It is a terrible yet thrilling story. Its progress is personified in Zeck, who, beginning as pro-company—"we're one big family"—becomes a partisan of the C. I. O. when the terrorization becomes too much for his old-fashioned Americanism. In Zeck, Miss Davidson has created a character who would be real even if he were not. And through the whole book runs the flavor of a unique community. The old Gold Rush song is sung in Picher:

> The miners come in forty-nine
> The whores they come in fifty
> The native sons in fifty-one
> And now they're fifty-fifty.

Local feuds give rise to bar-room fights and tall tales about them. "Tell me the next mornin' you could pick up eyeballs like shelled grapes all over the Bloody Knuckle." There are many excellent scenes: the company dance, the death of Dan from silicosis, the flamboyant home of Liz, who asks "What is hit like to be as good as anybudy else?" (She is married to a rich Indian who, thanks to her, has not been robbed and who belongs to the Hoods! Like Zeck, Liz comes round to the "CIO-ers.") The courage of the lead workers who stick to the union against tremendous odds of illness, hunger, and terror runs like a red thread through the book, and from Picher the impersonal National Labor Board appears as an avenging angel over the mounds of chat.

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One New York reviewer has suggested that Miss Davidson overdramatizes. Perhaps. But Picher, Oklahoma, is not New York City, and the "children of lead" live in a world so brutal that reality itself is melodrama.

MARGARET MARSHALL

Our Good Neighbors

AMERICAS TO THE SOUTH. By John T. Whitaker. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

TO AN increasing extent our opinions are being molded by journalists rather than historians. Shrewd, sophisticated assayers of men and events return from a year of hectic travel to present America with the insides of a continent. Often their acquaintance with archives is passing, their understanding of the economic currents that shape nations superficial, and their views concerning the cultural patterns of these distant continents such as may be gleaned from hurried interviews and secondary sources. The compensatory advantages are that these journalists are able to make quick syntheses and to extract the urgent from the merely interesting. The standard of American foreign reporting is extraordinarily high, and such men as Gunther and Whitaker have helped fortify our democratic processes by their compact, intelligent presentation of the raw material for popular decisions on foreign policy.

After Munich John Whitaker went to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, and Mexico to test his assumption that the totalitarian powers were prepared to conquer a substantial portion of the Latin American world. His findings are presented in this argumentative, informative, and exceedingly readable book. Whitaker has superb skill as an interviewer. He was able to extract the underlying philosophy of Chile's Aguirre Cerda and Cárdenas's views on Mexico's stand in a European war in the course of a few hours' conversation. His pen portraits—for example, that of the Mexican crown prince, General Avila Camacho—are incisive and certain. The analysis of the economic scene in these six countries is, generally speaking, accurate and realistic. Although the author evidently spent most of his time with statesmen and foreign business groups, his sympathies are with the under-dog. There is a strong plea for cooperation with progressive Chile, and a well-rounded picture of Mexico's contemporary social revolution. Each chapter presents a clear analysis of many of the forces that are molding the continent. For the intelligent lay reader who has no patience with the picturesque I can think of no better book on the contemporary problems of Latin America. Even when one disagrees with Whitaker, one is impressed by his acumen and fairness.

Now for unfavorable criticisms. The work is marred by a few mistakes of spelling and fact. For instance, Whitaker tells us that Mexico "had always been a heavy exporter of cereals," but was obliged to make big imports as a result of the agricultural crisis under Cárdenas, and that consequently "wage increases have been more than wiped out." As a matter of fact, Mexico has been a net importer of grains almost continuously for the past forty years. Retail food prices were held constant during the year just preceding the completion of Whitaker's manuscript. There is no conclusive statistical

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evidence concerning real wages in Mexico, but the meager indexes available indicate that labor has made gains.

Whitaker makes sound criticisms of the Hull brotherly-love fiesta and the effort to fight Aski marks with the David's slingshot of reciprocal trade pacts. He offers a program to aid Chile with short-term credits and to threaten the Argentine government with discriminatory duties. He believes that bad neighbors, such as Bolivia, will not be weaned from fascism with the milk of human kindness.

Apparently Whitaker assumes that the expropriation of American corporate holdings is by and large an evil process. Consequently, his analysis of the effects of economic imperialism and the roots of Latin America's contemporary epidemic of nationalistic reprisals is weak, nor can one agree with his essentially trade-balance view of the battle against fascism. I feel that Mrs. Carr is more realistic when she suggests in her "South American Primer" that the real task of Washington is to aid those Latin American forces which are striving for democratic and progressive government.

Whitaker overemphasizes the military aspect of fascist penetration. Few informed observers would agree that Brazil faces "a more-than-likely attack from Germany." The author proposes that we form "a non-partisan board of national strategy" to deliberate in utmost secrecy about the plight of our southern neighbors. He feels that if such a board had been formed, Washington might have been spared its Mexican headache. "The Standard Oil Company, the C. I. O., and the Roosevelt Administration," he observes, "were all working at cross purposes. . . . The three should have come to an agreement." Thus the Achilles heel of the Whitaker program is that of the Good Neighbor policy—the assumption that class conflicts, regional struggles, and the variety of alignments that cut across national frontiers can be politely exorcised in the interest of the abstractions of continental power politics.

NATHANIEL WEYL

Cottonville and the Race Problem

AFTER FREEDOM, A CULTURAL STUDY IN THE DEEP SOUTH. By Hortense Powdermaker. The Viking Press. $3.

IN SCIENCE as in the arts the pressing nature of the race problem has stimulated a constantly increasing number of realistic analyses of the interracial situation as it bears on the lives of American Negroes and whites. "Cottonville," the locale of the most recent study of this kind, is situated in Mississippi. It is a small town, its population of about 3,000 being divided almost equally between the two racial groups. It is the county seat and as such is the center of an area marked by a cotton-growing economy reared on the share-cropping system, with some 30 per cent of the inhabitants white. Sleepily Cottonville lives its life, the folk of both races adapting themselves as best they can to the handicaps imposed by the ever-present factor of group relationships based on inequality in power, privilege, and social position.

Miss Powdermaker, an anthropologist, conceived her study "as an experiment" in applying "to a segment of contemporary American society the training and methods of a cultural anthropologist and whatever perspective had been gained through field work in civilizations other than our own." Whether the methods of studying foreign cultures can be transferred *in toto* to the analysis of our own society is a point that need not be discussed here; in this particular case the culture of Cottonville is made available to us in a suggestive manner.

We are first shown the modes of life and the attitudes of the dominant whites, and especially how their point of view, operating through their preferred legal, economic, and social position, checks and irritates the underlying Negro population. We see how violence follows on repression, shootings and other forms of physical encounter occurring among the Negroes themselves, while the constant threat of lynching acts as a deterrent on any direct Negro protest. In the county at large the relationship between the poor whites and the Negroes also appears as a highly significant element in the total picture, especially where economic rivalry is exploited as it manifests itself in mutual distrust on the part of those who have most to gain by joining forces against a common foe.

The details of Negro life in towns and on the plantations are next set forth; they give background for the consideration of certain special sociological and psychological problems. These have to do with the nature of the Negro family in Cottonville, the forces that make for its formation and its relative ease of disintegration, and the place of children in it; the forms of Negro religion and the manner in which the more hysterical forms of Negro worship are matched by the practices of certain white sects; and the place of education in Negro life and aspirations. A frank statement of Negro attitudes toward whites and a description of the processes of change which loom so important—and so unrealized—in determining the future of Negros and whites alike, conclude the book. The discussion throughout is documented with case materials and is noteworthy for the way in which women's reactions are taken into account.

As an anthropological work, the book is to be classed as a "functionalist" study, which is to say that the author's major interest is to understand the interrelation of the various aspects of the culture considered rather than their historical development. It is in the awkwardness with which Miss Powdermaker handles such historical discussion as she includes, therefore, that we find the essential weakness of her book. Does Negro history really go no farther back than "before freedom"—to slavery times? It is undoubtedly true, as Miss Powdermaker states, that "the Negro did not come here culturally naked," and that "a large part of his aboriginal culture was of necessity lost." But certainly this did not occur to an extent which justifies our interpreting all Negro life as though pre-slavery experience had never existed. Negro children are regularly punished in Africa by beating—but reading the explanation of a like custom among Cottonville Negroes solely in terms of the punishment given slaves, one would never suspect it. The possession scenes described as taking place in Negro—and white—churches might have occurred during pagan rites anywhere in West Africa today or in the West Indies. The importance of the mother in the lower-class Negro families of Cottonville was undoubtedly encouraged by the historical circumstance of slave life, but what was reinforced was a typical West African attitude

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deriving from the importance of a mother as against a father in the aboriginal polygynous households.

Such matters are by no means only of academic interest. For the idea that Negroes have no history that antedates slavery and the failure to probe carry-overs of an earlier tradition not only throw explanations of present-day Negro behavior askew but help to perpetuate one of the two or three myths that act as major imponderables in warping thought and attitudes of Negroes and whites alike when they approach the interracial problem. It is to be hoped that Miss Powdermaker will go on with the work she has commenced in this book; but it is also to be hoped that her future studies will take into account the requisite historical background and thus give depth and greater meaning to the present-day modes of life and points of view of the folk treated in this volume.

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

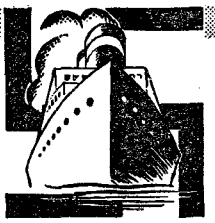
Guides to Political Thought

POLITICAL THOUGHT. THE EUROPEAN TRADITION. By J. P. Mayer. The Viking Press. $4.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DOCTRINES OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPE. By M. Oakeshott. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

THE NEW DEMOCRACY AND THE NEW DESPOTISM. By Charles E. Merriam. Whittlesey House. $3.

POLITICAL thought was comparatively at rest, as far as the general public was concerned, for the half-century between 1870 and 1920. Then it seemed that the political theory of liberal democracy was firmly intrenched. In the twenties and even more in the thirties of our century a lively and widespread interest in political theory has made itself felt and has become a symptom of the general unrest characteristic of our time. The new interest produces a growing crop of books, of which each of the three under review fulfils a definite need. Mr. Oakeshott's volume attempts to give to the reader, in the original or in English translations, the most significant texts on five political theories which he thinks compete today in the world—that of representative democracy, of Roman Catholicism, of Marxian communism, of fascism, and of National Socialism. The book can serve well as a textbook. In the nature of the case it was most difficult to find appropriate expressions for the presentation of liberal democracy, for liberal democracy has no authoritative spokesmen, such as Roman Catholicism or the modern totalitarian creeds possess. The texts for democracy are entirely confined to nineteenth-century thinkers. Even so it is to be regretted that Thomas Jefferson is represented not at all and Abraham Lincoln only inadequately, and that the text of the Bill of Rights and of the Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen are not included. The most satisfactory sections are those on Catholicism and communism. There is no direct translation from Hitler's "Mein Kampf," but there are some highly intelligent notes summarizing his doctrines and furnishing a very valuable guide to a deeper understanding of "Mein Kampf." It is to be regretted that National Socialism and fascism are not illustrated by more excerpts from theoretical writings, which would have given a much clearer understanding of the issues involved than is obtained from



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the translations of some of the legislation of the new regimes.

Mr. Mayer and his associates undertook an equally valuable and useful task. Their preoccupation is historical: they wish to map the road which the political thought of Europe has traveled down to our time. After all, as Professor Tawney reminds us in his Introduction, Europe is a mature civilization not to be struck stupid with terror because some frantic dervish offers conversion or the sword. There are, in this Introduction, some sentences which need quoting because they say what cannot be said often enough concerning the fundamental difference between the democratic and the fascist regimes.

> It is true that, whatever its ostensible creed, no society lives up to it. It is one thing, however, to accept a system of ideas which gives these values a high place, while failing to act with consistency upon it. It is quite another to affirm that they are poison, not food, and to fall prostrate before a counter-system which makes an idol of their opposites. Man is condemned to live in twilight; but darkness is darkness, and light is light. What matters is the direction in which his face is set. When slavery is a powerful vested interest, established in a society which pays lip-service to freedom, it is shocking but not fatal. When it is declared to be not merely a regrettable necessity but a loftier form of civilization, the springs of political morality are poisoned at the source. In the collective affairs of mankind bad doctrines are always and everywhere more deadly than bad actions. The latter are the sins of the wicked, the former of the good. The latter destroy life; the former make it not worth while to live. . . . The continued spectacle of atrocious actions, and the incessant preaching of atrocious doctrines, insensibly weakens the repugnance felt for both, even in minds which still recently regarded them with horror.

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The book itself is divided into two parts. The first gives the history of political thought in Europe from Greece to the seventeenth century. The second, in chapters by different contributors, discusses separately the political thought in Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, America, and Russia down to the present day. The different chapters are of course of unequal value, but all of them will help to a deeper understanding of the European tradition, which the editor sums up as the ethos of reason.

> Our task is to hand it down to the generations to come, even if we should have to defend it on the field of battle. Apart from this spirit the idea and the fact of Europeanism lose their significance: we destroy the ground on which we have built and hope to build. Without reason the European would sink into barbarism.

A wide circulation of this book among thoughtful readers will help to establish a truer perspective of the values which we are called upon to defend if Western civilization is to survive.

More practical and more directly turned toward present needs is the book by Professor Merriam, in which he vigorously confirms his faith in a rational democracy. He emphasizes the conscious control over the development of our social life as against mere laissez faire, and believes that democratic social planning wisely conceived would be directed toward the release of human capacities for creative purposes. He turns against the new glorification of force and violence as a contributing factor to modern advancement, but he adds, significantly and in my opinion necessarily, that if force and war are the arguments used by the opponents, they can be and will be effectively answered in their own terms by democracy. And, in my opinion again correctly, he repudiates any overemphasis on economic factors.

> Our problems involve forms of behavior, value systems, ideas, and institutions beyond the bounds of economics in any ordinary use of that term. Our age is an industrial age, but our problems transcend industry.

This restatement of liberal democracy in the terms of present-day life is a book for the student and the general reader alike, combining the advantage of mature scholarship with the clarity of diction of the teacher.

From three different points of view, by three different methods, the three books approach the same subject, trying to be a guide through the maze of the confused political thought of today. But the ultimate decisions will not come by imitative competition, by economic improvement, or even by reasoning alone, for as Mr. Oakeshott rightly observes, democracy cannot look to modern authoritarianism for any relevant and constructive criticism. The total of their relevant criticisms is absurdly small.

> Indeed, modern skepticism as to the efficacy of thought is unambiguously reflected in most of these doctrines. They do not trouble to hide their tendency to descend from reasoned statements to mere assertions and from thought to febrile activity as a substitute for thought.

They can be met only by unflinching firmness and conviction, based upon the rational principles of Western thought. No concessions, no compromise, no ambiguity can help. The books by Mr. Mayer and by Professor Merriam are noteworthy because both radiate that firmness which is so much needed today.

HANS KOHN

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FILMS

CLIFFORD ODETS'S stage play "Golden Boy" has been turned into an interesting prize-fight picture (Columbia). I remember the play as a minor work in which a little spark of an idea and a central character of a special hysterical type were smothered by a routine plot and kept alive for a theatrical evening by tricks of dialogue, poetic moods, and melodramatic short cuts. I left the theater with the rather unpleasant feeling that a talent for recording bits of life and laudable though still immature ambitions had been wasted in the dramatization of a slick-paper magazine story. There were moments of higher reality and truth, in which the special conditions of a milieu and its people became typical of the common fate, but as a whole the drama remained limited to effects.

Of course, one could not expect the movie industry to develop and heighten the real values of the play. Hollywood took the story of the youth who deserts his violin for a pair of boxing gloves and is torn between the two for the remainder of the play, assisted by a dame from Newark who "does not like the ceiling." First, in the service of another man, she persuades him to become a champion, but afterward, when he has knocked out Chocolate Drop forever, she saves him from commiting suicide and tells him that his business is to play the violin. In the picture the love story follows more conventional lines than in the play. And in the end the lovers do not die in a symbolic automobile accident. Instead, the girl brings the boy home to his father's idyllic grocery store—to onions and pretzels, chess and music. And this happy ending, be it said, fits the story better than the tragic curtain of the play.

It would be unjust to criticize the picture "Golden Boy" on the basis of the play's abortive ambitions. Nevertheless, these ambitions, thinned out though they were in Hollywood, add enough to the movie version to make it more than the usual prize-fight opera. Remarkably enough, the better spirit of the play is contained in a sequence which has no model in the original. The scenes of the fight in Madison Square Garden are easily the best of their kind ever done by a camera —exciting, precise, packed with social criticism. The work of the director (Rouben Mamoulian) is spirited and makes use of the means of movie art, whereas in most cases the scenes of a stage play are merely photographed. The newcomer, William Holden, as the golden boy suffers under the complexity of his part, but has some convincing moments in the second half of the picture. Barbara Stanwyck, working in understatements, reveals without talking about it the whole life of a girl tossed from pillar to post. She and Adolph Menjou, who plays the hard-boiled boxing manager with a longing for a home and kids, are, among the whole cast, most true to life. Especially for those who saw or read the stage play the picture will be interesting, partly for its added scenes, partly as a good example of the timid approach and inadequate methods which still prevail in the attempts to translate stage literature into cinema.

"Lady of the Tropics" (Paramount) is a delightful picture

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if you know how to take it. See it, if you must, with the idea that the author, Ben Hecht, has written a satire on Hollywood. I skip the story so as not to give away its surprisingly conventional turns. You may also look at Hedy Lamarr *en face*—a little turn, a profile, and the mysterious beauty is gone, as it is when she opens her mouth. (How wisely she was used in her first American picture, "Algiers"!) Here she plays the part of a half-breed, wild and sinful and noble, with a yearning for Paris. Opposite her you will find Robert Taylor somewhat comic as a tragic American husband who loves and loves. His subtle savagery when he finds out that he has been betrayed may be a little slapstick, but this will not kill your laughter. One performance does not fit into the whole. It is Joseph Schildkraut's portrayal of the half-breed Delaroch—a fine characterization by an excellent actor.

"Our Leading Citizen" (Paramount) is not merely a stupid picture but a piece of anti-union propaganda of the most unscrupulous and hypocritical kind. At the beginning you wonder why in a Hollywood picture a manufacturer who cuts the wages of his workers is drawn in so unsympathetic a fashion. But soon the cat is out of the bag. The workers strike, and an out-of-town organizer arrives. He is, in talk and gesture, the devil himself, and he is interested only in stirring up unrest and violence. When the manufacturer restores the wage cut, the organizer, nevertheless, wants to prolong the strike. He even joins hands with the leader of the professional strike-breakers the manufacturer had imported. The whole social conflict is pictured without reference to reality: the workers have no idea what to do and are mere pawns in the hands of false leaders; the innocent girl who has incited the strike in good faith learns the lesson which the producer wants to put over—keep to the middle of the road, mistrust agitators. "Our Leading Citizen" is an anti-labor picture in disguise and should be boycotted.

FRANZ HOELLERING

RECORDS

VICTOR, whose practice has been to make a special release of a large number of imported recordings once or twice a year, begins this month to issue a few of these recordings at a time in what it calls a connoisseur's corner of its regular monthly list. This increases the number of recordings issued each month, but I find that preferable to the annual or semi-annual avalanche. And as it happens, two of the outstanding sets of this month are in the special, additional group.

The year 1828, that incredible last year of Schubert's life—the year of the C major Symphony, the String Quintet Opus 163—was the year also of the last group of piano sonatas, the posthumously published Sonatas in C minor, A major, and B-flat major. And the incandescent musical powers, the matured feeling, the spiritual sublimity that are experienced in the symphony and quintet are to be found also in the sonatas. The C minor was recorded recently for Gamut in a powerful but somewhat feverish performance by Webster Aitken; the sublimity of the B-flat is negated by the nervous and mannered performance of Ernst Victor Wolff on Columbia; but this work has been recorded abroad by Schnabel, whose performance of it last winter was one of those feats of revelation that only he among pianists seems able to accomplish; and his performance of the A major, now offered by Victor (4½ records, $9), is an achievement of the same order. (The people for whom a detail like his bunching together the groups of three sixteenth notes into a broken chord, at the end of the scherzo, will count for more than all the wonders of his phrasing and structural delineation throughout the work, are people for whom the flaw in the Oriental rug must count for more than the riches of color and design.)

In connection with this set Victor has made another welcome departure from past practice: swallowing its pride it has reprinted the H. M. V. notes on the sonata. They are welcome because of their evident competence and understanding of what they deal with; but they were written by a man who does not seem to have considered that the set would be bought by a number of people equipped with the musical sensitiveness to appreciate the work, but not with the technical knowledge to understand some of his observations about key relations and structure, nor with the ability to read the printed score of the sonata and discover there the passages he discusses—a man, then, who did not think of making any adjustment to these readers, such as to tell them exactly where on a record they could hear the passage he was referring to. This is something which Victor might have done when it reprinted the notes, but which it did not do.

In contrast with the Schubert sonata is the rarely heard Symphony No. 86 of Haydn (three records, $5)—not without moments of exquisite tenderness and deep seriousness, but characteristic rather in its high spirits and playfulness, and wholly delightful. The lighter movements are done to perfection by Bruno Walter with the London Symphony; in the slow movement I am aware of a slackness in the performance where others may hear dulness in the music. If the test of a performer is his slow tempos, that is because in fast music the sounds are brought into relation to one another inevitably by the mere rapidity of their succession, whereas in slow they must be brought into this relation by proper values of time and force which must be estimated and executed with precision and control. It is these values, achieved with this controlled precision, that create the life that is in a slow movement played by Toscanini or Schnabel—even in one like the second movement of Mozart's Concerto K. 595, which one may feel Schnabel is taking too slowly. And it is the lack of these precisely achieved values that makes the slow movement of Haydn's No. 86 sound dull.

The third set of the connoisseur group offers the unfamiliar Violin Sonata of Guillaume Lekeu, who died in 1894 at the age of twenty-four, and who may have promised much to his French contemporaries but turns out to say nothing of significance today. The work is played by the Menuhins (four records, $8), of whom Hephzibah continues to be the more impressive artist. On the other hand, among the regular releases is another of the powerful and individual works of Ernest Bloch—the Viola Suite, superbly recorded by William Primrose and Fritz Kitzinger (four records, $8). The rest next time.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

That Nazi-Soviet Pact

Dear Sirs: Loud cries of anger and dismay have risen from the liberal ranks as a result of the Soviet-Nazi non-aggression pact. The democracies shout "Communist trickery" and "double-crossing" while they boil with self-righteous wrath at their betrayal at the hands of the Bolsheviks. Double-crossing in a game whose only rule is opportunism? Trickery in a struggle between cynical gamblers whose only objective is to win? Before signing the non-aggression pact Russia was threatened by the anti-Comintern pact and merely tolerated by the democratic group because of its power to restrain Germany and maintain the status quo so dear to affluent democratic hearts. Russia can now bargain with England and France. It is no longer forced to side with them because of a common enemy.

Have not the Communists predicted that the imperialistic powers would eventually be forced by their predatory economies to engage in a titanic struggle for markets in which they would destroy themselves? Would not this, to the Communist, inevitable process be accelerated by encouraging Germany to throw itself against England and France? And how better do this than by tempting promises of neutrality and economic assistance to Germany? Of course if either the Germans or Russians saw an opportunity to further their ends by breaking the treaty they would not hesitate a moment to do so.

The cries of moral indignation sound pathetically childlike. There has merely been another shrewd move by two of the several claimants to European or world hegemony. This is a game "for keeps" in which sensitive idealists had better be prepared for severe shocks.

A. MILLER

New York, August 28

Dear Sirs: Your statement that the Hitler-Stalin pact will cause bitter disillusionment among the left forces here and abroad is somewhat inaccurate because it completely identifies left forces with the Communists and their fellow-travelers. A great many of us on the left were long since thoroughly disillusioned with Stalin and the Communists; and to us the pact between the two totalitarianisms is not disillusioning, but rather confirms our distrust of communism under Stalin.

We have seen for many years that the Communists and the various associations, leagues, and committees in which they participated faithfully changed as Russia changed—from advocating dictatorship to rendering lip-service to democracy, from denunciation of all capitalist imperialism to advocating collective security, and now back again to a Russian isolation which is as non-neutral in its aid to Hitler as our own so-called neutrality legislation.

The obvious drift of Stalin's policy from working-class internationalism to Russian nationalism and now to actual economic alliance with Hitler, and the way in which Stalin forced acceptance of his changes of policy on all those whom he could reach combined to disillusion long ago a great part of the "left forces."

ALFRED BAKER LEWIS

Boston, Mass., August 31

The Pacifist Position

Dear Sirs: To the editors of *The Nation* and numerous other journals of opinion the present international scene is variously described as "democracy versus totalitarianism" or, as it affects America, "collective security versus isolationism." May I suggest that the basic issue to many of us is militarism versus pacifism. Freda Kirchwey says in your September 2 issue that "war would be preferable to another deal with Hitler, and war would be preferable to the continued struggle of nerves and diplomacy that has exhausted the peoples for the past months." I am amazed at the ease with which Miss Kirchwey urges mass murder and destruction.

War is sin! War is hell! War is organized atrocity! War *is* totalitarianism! War is reactionary! War is anti-labor! And that is what you prescribe to cure a case of "nerves."

The word aggression which throws you into such a militant mood is part of the vocabulary of militarism, which some analysts prefer to call imperialism. Armed conquest of new territory is as old as Europe itself.

The time has now come for all genuine progressives to make a clean break with the war system. I care not whether it is the dynamic imperialism of Germany, the mysterious militarism of Russia, or the static imperialism of Great Britain. I call upon the people of the world to renounce their false faith in armed might and take up non-violent resistance against red, brown, black, and British militarists.

Pacifism, properly understood, is not passivism. It is a way of a life, a process dealing with the problems of justice and readjustment. Since war under the guise of aggression, imperialism, anti-aggression, defense, and other holier labels has given us this kind of world, why not break this vicious circle of fighting evil with evil?

As long as magazines like *The Nation* simply select particular wars to support, balancing one set of status quo aggressors against a hungry group like the Nazis, the world will continue to have the jitters. Unless we oppose all wars, international and civil, injustice will mount and civilization will perish.

Both of us, I believe, have essentially the same objectives—justice, a healthy people, a robust culture, and genuine security. These things cannot be achieved by the methods of Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain, Daladier, Stalin, or any other national leader using streamlined murder.

DONOVAN E. SMUCKER,
Youth Secretary, the Fellowship of Reconciliation

New York, September 6

Who Got the Licking?

Dear Sirs: When I first read the title of Kenneth G. Crawford's article in the August 19 *Nation,* for some reason I accented the second word of "So *Roosevelt* Got a Licking." And it occurred to me that a fine article could be written bearing the same title but describing instead the licking the people of the United States took in the last session of Congress. Especially the "One-Third Ill Fed" so ably presented by Leslie Epstein in the same issue.

So Roosevelt got a licking? How about the million or so that will be dropped from the relief rolls? How about the thousands of families that will *not* be saved from the anti-social

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diseases of slum areas that were slated to be cleared up by the FHA and the United States Housing Authority? How about the WPA workers deprived of their last bit of self-respect and forced to accept charity; not to mention the actors, writers, and musicians who have found their most appreciative audiences in those who cannot afford to support them?

Personally I cannot comprehend how any intelligent, educated member of the "economy bloc" in Congress can stand before his mirror in the morning and not drop his eyes in shame. Not one of them, if compelled to visit the home of a family on relief, would be anything but appalled at the condition in which the family must live. Very few of them would fail to dig into their own pockets to help the unfortunate members. And yet they calmly vote, before the eyes of the whole world, to take away from that selfsame family the woefully insufficient pittance, the absolutely necessary minimum, for hope and even life itself.

What possible excuse is there for that pitiful word "economy" in the face of such need? Do we as individuals want to economize at the sacrifice of human life and values? I cast my vote for more and ever more relief so long as relief is needed by one person. If we are headed for bankruptcy—and I believe that is nonsense—let us all go bankrupt together. HAROLD J. FREEMAN

Philadelphia, September 6

The Case of Pete Panto

Dear Sirs: Almost two months ago a young Italian-American, Peter Panto, disappeared. For two weeks only the most routine search was made for him. But more recently William B. Herlands, Commissioner of Investigation, assigned one of his ace investigators and legal aides, J. Roland Sala, to the case. Mr. Sala has promised startling relevations.

Pete Panto was a dock worker. He came home from his work on the Moore-McCormick piers on Friday, July 14, told some friends he was going to meet "two guys I don't trust," and has not been seen since.

Pete Panto was a man with a sense of justice who was fighting to wipe out the rackets on the Brooklyn docks which bled his compatriots white of their hard-earned wages. Pete was also anti-Fascist—he'd been back to Italy since the advent of Mussolini. Two thousand dock workers believed in Pete and his ability to help them free themselves. Obviously Pete was dangerous to certain groups.

These dock rackets are not a new story. They have been the talk of the waterfront for a good many years. When Thomas E. Dewey was appointed special prosecutor by Governor Lehman, he intimated he would do something about it. He scratched the surface and turned away. Was it too much for the racket buster?

Yet these rackets must be endured by men who earn an average wage of $15 to $20 a week and are terrorized into patronizing specific groceries, barber shops, saloons, and even houses of prostitution if they wish to retain their meager living. Father Swanstrom, in his book "The Waterfront Labor Problem," gives dozens of case histories of dock workers forced to apply for charity in order to live. A United States Department of Labor Report states: "At the present time a very conservative estimate would probably place more than 50 per cent of all longshoremen on the relief roles."

Pete Panto was impatient with those who said nothing could be done about it. He knew that this was a country where a man had a right to be free to spend his wages as he wished. He wanted to arouse his fellow-workers to assert their democratic rights. He was succeeding when he disappeared.

I hope your readers will write to John Harlen Amen, at Borough Hall, Brooklyn, urging him to investigate Pete's disappearance and these rackets.

MURIEL DRAPER, Chairman
Waterfront Committee for
Democratic Action

New York, September 5

Dear Sirs: I am the fiancee of Pete Panto, longshoreman, who on July 14 left his home and never came back. He never did that before, and I am sure he did not do it then of his own free will. Something horrible must have happened to him. That is why I write to you. I want you to help me find him. His father, who is old and ailing, and I appeal to you to use your influence with the Mayor and police to help find our Pete.

Perhaps you have read about Pete in the papers. Walter Winchell—my heart goes dead when I think of it—says maybe he's at the bottom of the East River. Whoever took him away did it because he was a good man. He tried to help the longshoremen, to save them from the gangsters and racketeers on the waterfront, to break the kickback system, and to make the union a better union for the men. The longshoremen liked Pete. The last time he called a meeting hundreds came. They wanted to go his way because they knew his way was right and he was for them. That was why he was taken away.

We were to be married this October coming. I am a poor girl. I don't know how to go about doing the things that will find Pete. I am hoping you can do something, write to the Mayor or to the police asking for a thorough investigation into the disappearance of our Pete. I am hoping that you will appeal to your readers to do the same. Please, I beg you to do everything you can.

ALICE MAFFIA

Brooklyn, N. Y., September 8

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JONATHAN GRIFFIN, author of "Lost Liberty?" is now traveling in the Balkan countries.

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